

THE LIFE, PERSONALITY AND WRITINGS OF AL-JUNAYD

A Study of a Third/Ninth Century Mystic
with

an Edition and Translation of his writings

by

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PRINTED FOR
THE TRUSTEES OF THE "E. J. W. GIBB MEMORIAL"
AND PUBLISHED BY LUZAC & COMPANY LTD.
46 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

1962

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ELIAS JOHN WILKINSON GIBB

and to promote those researches into the History, Literature, Philosophy and Religion of the Turks, Persians and Arabs, to which, from his Youth upwards, until his premature and deeply lamented Death in his forty-fifth year, on December 5, 1901, his life was devoted.

وَلَهُ آثَارُنَا تَدُلُّ عَلَيْنَا * فَانْظُرُوا بَعْدَنَا إِلَى الْآثَارِ

*"These are our works, these works our souls display;
Behold our works when we have passed away."*

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INTRODUCTION

BAGHDĀD IN THE THIRD CENTURY

Baghdād, in the third century of the Hijra (ninth century A.D.), little more than a century old, had already passed through various stages of evolution—social, economic, political and also spiritual. Many contacts of varying degrees of intimacy with Byzantine, Persian and Indian civilizations had been made in the preceding period in this metropolis, and in this century the influence of these manifold contacts was to develop in every sphere of culture. This was especially noticeable in the academic world, in the fields of theology, jurisprudence, philology, literature and philosophy.

Certain extremist tendencies were translated into political movements in the panorama of this century. We may refer—in the sociological sphere—against the background of a cultured and prosperous society whose wealth was drawn from a far-flung trade—to the social unrest of the lowest class, the Zinj, the slaves of Baṣra, who rebelled in 264 A.H., and also to the religious and equalitarian revolt of the Carmathians in 278 A.H.

In the religious sphere a new movement came into the foreground: the Mystical School of Baghdād. This 'Irāqī school had, from its very inception, certain features which distinguish it from all other ṣūfī schools. Thus they speak of *shath* or overflowing (Überschwang); *'ibāda* or adoration of God; and *lisān* or tongue, eloquence, in an original and exclusive way.¹ Contemporary literature records the fact that the School of Baghdād held different views from those held by other ṣūfī schools, and notes especially their difference with the School of Khurasān, with which Baghdād maintained continuous contact and debate.²

This Ṣūfī School of Baghdād was recognized as highly significant at the time, and exercised a profound influence not only on contemporary Muslim thought, but also on all ṣūfīs up

¹ Abū'l Maḥāsīn, *An-Nujūm Azzāhira*, v. 3, p. 169.

Qushayrī, *Risāla*, p. 103.

² Qushayrī, p. 89.

to the present day. It began afresh its questioning on God and man, putting great stress on personal experience, thus shaking every established traditional concept—shaking and, at the same time, giving new life and colour to Islamic tradition and lifting it to new ethical and visionary planes. This Ṣūfī School of Baghdād, which raised the ethical ideals and the innermost feelings of the Muslim religious spirit to their loftiest heights, has not yet been adequately explored. With the discovery of new material, new research work on some aspects of the school became possible, and scholars like Massignon, Nicholson, R. Hartmann, Arberry and Margaret Smith have made notable contributions.

An original and contemporary document of this school, a work by Abū'l Qāsim al-Junayd, has recently come to light, but has not yet been studied. Al-Junayd, as we shall see, became the master and inspired teacher of the Baghdād School in the latter half of the third century, and the more we study his personality, the more light is shed on the Ṣūfī School of Baghdād in particular, and on the significant early development in Ṣūfism in general.

In these pages we shall endeavour to give a picture both of the personality and of the doctrine of al-Junayd, as drawn from the original sources.

SURVEY OF SOURCES

It would have been very helpful for the study of al-Junayd's life and doctrine if the two original books written by his two intimate disciples—*Ṭabaqāt an Nussāk* by Abū Sa'īd Ibn al-A'rābī and *Hikāyāt al-Awliyā'* by Muḥammad Ja'far al-Khuldi—were still accessible.

IBN AL-A'RĀBĪ: Abū Sa'īd Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ziyād ibn Bishr ibn al-A'rābī was born in Baṣra, but eventually settled down in Mecca, where he died at the age of 94 in 341 A.H. He was a traditionalist and jurist, but at the same time a ṣūfī. During his sojourn in Baghdād, before ultimately settling in Mecca, he frequented the circle of the Baghdād ṣūfis and was a

disciple of al-Junayd, al-Qalānīsī and 'Amr al-Makkī¹. Later on, when he lived in Mecca, he was the Shaykh al-Ḥarām, the leading scholar in the Sacred Land. From Mecca—the centre of the Pilgrimage—where he taught for more than thirty years, he spread not only the *Ḥadīth*, in which he was profoundly versed, but also the esoteric teachings and way of the Mystics which he learnt by experience in the School of Baghdād. Many contemporary scholars who came to Mecca as pilgrims, in particular those from Africa and Spain, studied under him and subsequently quoted his teachings as disciples. Thus, for example, it is known that the first book on the *Ḥadīth* which reached Cordova in Spain and which was recognized as authoritative, was the *Kitāb as-Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd al-Baṣrī (died 275 A.H.). The scholars of Cordova received this important book through the agency of Abū Sa'īd al-A'rābī, who had himself been a disciple of Abū Dāwūd.² Scholars from Spain and Africa also took Abū Sa'īd's own books back to their home countries. In all probability other ṣūfī books reached the western Islamic world through Abū Sa'īd of Mecca. It is fair, then, to assume that the new mystical thought of the realm of the East first became known to the distant West by way of Mecca, through this great *Shaykh*. Thus the torch of philosophy appears to have been carried from Baghdād to Mecca, and thence by the pilgrims to Spain. Here, as a result, very lively discussions amongst scholars on all the issues of thought and doctrine took place.³

It appears that Abū Sa'īd ibn al-A'rābī was an authority on al-Junayd, whose spiritual leadership he gratefully acknowledged. He said in his *Ṭabaqāt an Nussāk*—quoted by Makkī—after giving the names of various mystics, “the last of these mystics was al-Junayd, and no one after him is worth mentioning.”⁴ Of this important book—*Ṭabaqāt an Nussāk*—many

¹ Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, p. 375.

Ibn al-Imād, *Shadharāt*, v. 2, p. 354.

² Al-Ishbili, *Fihrist*, p. 286, ff.

³ Cf. Asin Palacios, *Obras Escogidas I*, p. 46.

⁴ *Qūt al-Qulūb*, v. 2, p. 41.

fragments have been preserved in quotations in the books of the following generation, as we shall see.¹

AL-KHULDĪ: Abū Moḥammad Ja'far ibn Nuṣayr ibn al-Qasīm al-Khawwāṣ al-Baghdādī al-Khuldī, who was born in 252 A.H. and who died in 348 A.H., also started his career as a traditionalist, and later on turned to ṣūfism. He had learned to sift and select Tradition and used this discrimination in collecting the sayings and anecdotes of the famous ṣūfīs of his time. He said: "Had I not turned to the ṣūfīs, I would have set before you the Tradition of the Prophet from the whole world."²

He was a novice of Baghdād and was one of the favoured and intimate pupils of al-Junayd. He repaid his teacher's favour by recording every detail of al-Junayd's life known to him and handed down to posterity his master's sayings. This task is done so well that Khuldī's work is a major source not only for al-Junayd but for his teacher Saqatī, and also for Saqatī's teacher al-Karkhī.

His work, *Hikāyāt al-Awliyā'*, was well known in Baghdād and judged by all to be a remarkable book. It was said: "The people of Baghdād say: 'The wonders of the world are three, the Allegoric utterances of Shiblī (ishārāt), the Mystical subtleties (Aphorisms—nukat) of al-Murta'ish, and the Anecdotes (ḥikāyāt) of Ja'far.'³

These two outstanding books, Abū Sa'id al-A'rābī's *Ṭabaqāt*

¹ Cf. Abū Sa'id's other works.

Al-Ishbīlī in his *Fihrist* composed in 712 A.H. records the following:

(1) *Kitāb al-Ikhtisās fī dhikr al-Faqr wa'l ghinā'*.

(2) *Kitāb al-Ikhlās wa Ma'ānī 'Ilm al-Bāṭin*.

(3) *Kitāb Ikhtisār at-Ṭarīq*.

(4) *Kitāb al-Maḥabba*.

(5) *Kitāb al-Ṣabr wa-t-Tasabbur*.

(6) *Kitāb al-Umr wa'sh-Shayb*.

(7) *Kitāb Ma'ānī az-ẓuhd wa'l Māqalāt fībi*.

(8) *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt an-Nussāk*. (*Fihrist*, p. 284.)

Ibn al-Imād (1032–1089 A.H.) records the following:

(9) *Kitāb Ta'rīkh al-Baṣra*. (Shadharāt, p. 354.)

Sarrāj in his *Luma'* gives us an extract of a book of Abū Sa'id's, entitled:

(10) *Kitāb al-Wajd*.

(11) *Risāla fī'l-Mawā'iz wa'l Fawā'id wa ghayri dhalika*.

(12) *Kitāb al-Qubal wa'l-mu'ānaqa wa'l-muṣāfaha*.

Of these numbers 7, 11 and 12 are in Brockelmann, G. A. L.

² Supplement I, p. 358.

³ Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt Aṣ-ṣūfiyya*, fol. 80a.

an *Nussāk* and Ja'far al-Khuldī's *Hikāyāt al-Awliyā'*, were very highly esteemed and widely read for many generations. These works are unfortunately no longer extant, but, when we read contemporary and other Arabic literature, we constantly meet quotations from them. They are the ultimate sources from which all later writers have directly or indirectly drawn their material—and to them we owe most of what we know about the period of the great ṣūfīs and their separate and individual contributions to the development of ṣūfī teaching at the critical and initial stages.

It was largely because both al-'A'rābī and al-Khuldī were recognized as authoritative traditionalists that this recognition of their authority extended to their works on the history of ṣūfism. We too have no choice but to accept their authority. It becomes abundantly clear from their books that both these great Shaykhs came to al-Junayd, already disciplined in the exacting school of Ḥadīth. They came to him for spiritual guidance and, in listening to al-Junayd's teaching, became completely moulded by the integrity of their teacher's mental discipline and fully permeated by his spiritual approach. Such quotations of their works as are still available for us have been accepted in this study as authentic.

AS-SARRĀJ: Abū Naṣr 'Abdullah ibn 'Alī as-Sarrāj at-Ṭusi, the author of the *Kitāb al-Luma' fī at-Taṣawwuf*, who died in 378 A.H., was a pupil of Ja'far al-Khuldī. In the *Kitāb al-Luma'* we find that he, the author, quotes many facts about al-Junayd, both from stories related to him by al-Khuldī and also from Khuldī's books which he used. Thus on one occasion he writes of his relationship with al-Khuldī in these words: "Ja'far al-Khuldī told me, while he was studying under him that he had heard al-Junayd say . . ."¹ This important book has fortunately survived and we owe its publication to Nicholson (1914), and to Arberry (1947), who completed it with an important newly discovered section. Sarrāj, in his *Kitāb al-Luma'*, gives us an authentic and full account of al-Junayd's teachings, quotes many of his aphorisms and describes the man in his relationship with contemporary ṣūfīs. This work is our unique available source for the bulk of information we have about

¹ Sarrāj, *Luma'*, p. 251.

al-Junayd. Some of the more esoteric quotations from Junayd's letters are preserved only in this work. The reason may well be that later writers were reluctant to adduce them, since, though they were couched in veiled terms, these passages might have been interpreted as impugning the purity of their faith. This book is then of prime importance in our study.

AL-MAKKĪ: Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad ibn 'Alī 'Aṭīya al-Makkī, who died in 386 A.H., the author of the *Kitāb Qūt al-Qulūb fī Mu'āmalāt al-Maḥbūb*, was a pupil of Abū Sa'īd al-A'rābī. He came from Jibal in Persia and was brought up in Mecca, whence he came to Baghdād and studied under Sarraj. Later he went to Baṣra, where he was too late to meet Abū'l Hasan ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī alive, but where he accepted his teaching from his works and disciples. In his book, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, Makkī drew much material about al-Junayd from his teacher Abū Sa'īd al-A'rābī.

A century later, Khaṭīb, the *sunni* historian, says of Makkī, that he used to give utterance to such confused statements about God that his teaching was regarded as heretical and his discourse shunned by the masses. But to-day when we read *Qūt al-Qulūb* we are inescapably drawn to Makkī by the sincere profession of inspired ṣūfī experience. We have before us one of the finest works of mystical expression. It is at one and the same time simple and sincere, learned and felt, inspired and inspiring. As a "document humaine" it must always be one of the treasures of Arabic literature. But great works of spiritual import make great demands on those who study them. The influence of the *Qūt al-Qulūb* on later generations of Muslim thinkers is directly proportional to their genius. Thus, al-Ghazzālī, universally recognized as a leading exponent of muslim thought, so fully accepted the teachings of Makkī that the famous *Ihyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn* can, with justification, be described as an enlargement and popularization of the *Qūt al-Qulūb*. The significance of the *Qūt al-Qulūb* in this study is not so much in the detail, which is sparse, as in the fact that the spiritual atmosphere which it so effectively creates is that atmosphere in which al-Junayd and his school flourished.

AL KALĀBĀDHĪ: a contemporary of al-Makkī, abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Kalābādhī is another important

authority on early ṣūfism. We know of him little beyond the fact that he was a Ḥanafī lawyer and died in Bokhara in 388 A.H. His book, *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf li-Madhbhab at-Taṣawwuf*, recently edited and translated by Arberry, describes the principles and practices of the ṣūfīs as known to him. It is important because it is the earliest extant endeavour to reconcile such points of difference as were thought to exist between the ṣūfī attitude and the accepted tenets of Islam. *Al-Kalābādhī's* book is thus a source for ṣūfī doctrine of the period, an original defence of the validity of the ṣūfī attitude and a work of unimpeachable impartiality since *al-Kalābādhī* was an orthodox sunni.

Kalābādhī's *Kitāb at-Ta'arruf li madhbhab at-Taṣawwuf* won immediate popularity throughout the whole muslim world, where it was accepted as authoritative. We are particularly fortunate in having at our disposal a printed edition of an almost contemporary translation and commentary in Persian by Abū Ibrāhīm ibn Isma'īl ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullah al-Mustamlī al-Bukhārī. Mustamlī, who died in 434 A.H. and who was a professional theologian, a native of the same town as Kalābādhī, may well have been his pupil. It is not an unlikely inference that he gives his interpretation on Kalābādhī's discourse at first or, at most, second hand. However, Mustamlī, in his commentary, departs from the caution and prudence of Kalābādhī and is full of information about the rather more advanced views of such diverse types as al-Hallāj and al-Junayd. Unfortunately, it has been possible to use Mustamlī only as an occasional reference, and it is to be hoped that some future scholar will make a study of what appears to be a first-rate source for the history and development of the early ṣūfī esoteric school.

AS-SULAMĪ: Abū 'Abd ur-Rahman Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Mūsa as-Sulamī an-Nisābūrī (born about 330 A.H., died 412 A.H.) wrote extensively on ṣūfī subjects. His *Ṭabaqāt as-Sūfiyya*, extant in manuscript,¹ was a popular work which appears to have served as a source for most later writers on the early ṣūfīs. 'Abdullah al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (died 481 A.H.) used to lecture on the lives of the ṣūfīs, taking as his text the *Ṭabaqāt as-Sūfiyya* and adding observations of his own. One of his

¹ British Museum, Add. 18520.

disciples took these lectures down in the "local language of Herāt." It was on this version that Jāmī based his well-known "Lives of the Saints"—*Nafahāt ul Uns*. Adh-Dhahabī has also used this book in the *Ta'rikh al-Islām*. For us, however, as-Sulamī is the repository of much of the anecdotal material about al-Junayd and the ṣūfis of his period. But, though the *Ṭabaqāt* also serves as a source for the aphorisms of al-Junayd, as-Sulamī has us still more deeply in his debt for his quotations of al-Junayd's doctrinal teachings in the *Haqā'iq At-Tafsīr* which is a prime source for early ṣūfism, to-day extant only in manuscript in the Dār-al-Kutub in Cairo. Here we may do more than sit at the feet of al-Junayd; we see al-Junayd's learning, inspiration and teaching set side by side and point by point next to that of his contemporaries. In this framework al-Junayd's originality and importance stand out beyond question.

ABŪ NU'AYM: Reference has been made to the *Hilyat al-Awliyā' wa Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā'* of al-Hafiz abū Nu'aym Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah al-Iṣfahānī, who died in 430 A.H. In this remarkable book most of the genuine ṣūfī traditions have been collected and handed down to us. Al-Iṣfahānī drew his material from al-A'rābī, al-Khuldī and a dozen or so authors quoted by name, who are new to us because their works are lost. This work, recently printed in Cairo, which contains material of great value on early ṣūfism in general, has been used in this study in particular as the unique source for many of al-Junayd's *Rasā'il* (letters).

AL KHAṬĪB: The voluminous *Ta'rikh Baghdād* of al-Hafiz abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, who died in 463 A.H., has been used extensively as a source for historical detail. Khaṭīb has closed many a gap left open by the other sources, and lit up many a dark corner in the labyrinth of our studies.

QUSHAYRĪ; HUJWĪRĪ: From the same century, the fifth, we have used the two well-known works: the *Risāla* of Abu'l Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī an-Nisābūrī (died 465 A.H.), and the *Kashf al-Mahjūb* of Abū l'Ḥasan Abī ibn 'Omar ibn Abī 'Alī al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī (died 470 A.H.), translated by Nicholson. These two works, which provide the fullest statement on ṣūfī tenets, have been used constantly, as

much for factual information as for the interpretation of technical terms and arguments used by al-Junayd.

The sources which have been listed are, then, the total of the primary sources used in this study of al-Junayd. Secondary sources are listed in the bibliography.

RASA'IL AL-JUNAYD: In recent years a manuscript of the letters of al-Junayd has come to light. The object of our book is to make the contents of al-Junayd's letters, as preserved in this Istanbul manuscript, *Shahit Ali* MS. 1374, accessible to the English reader. We have undertaken to edit and to translate them. In preparing the translation reference has been made to the sources listed above and, in comparing the matter in the *Rasā'il* with what is available elsewhere, three points come to the fore: first, that the picture of al-Junayd's doctrine is filled in significantly; second, that al-Junayd's position as the outstandingly original and authoritative formulator of ṣūfī thought has hitherto not been recognized; and finally, that these *Rasā'il* embody the secret teaching of al-Junayd, which was reserved exclusively for the elect.¹

These are the personal documents of a great mystic of the third century A.H., which, written in a half-colloquial, half-elevated and always intimate style, reach the loftiest heights of mysticism and are, in fact, unequalled in Arab literature. For us they are of unique value in finding our bearings in the wide sea of early Islamic mysticism.

These *Rasā'il* reveal the system of al-Junayd's thought. Al-Junayd sets down in writing the fundamental principles of Islamic mysticism and, in making his synthesis of ṣūfī thought, prepares that path which was later to be followed by many generations of ṣūfis.²

It would be true to say that what Ash-Shāfi'ī did for jurisprudence in his *risāla*, al-Junayd did for ṣūfism in his *Rasā'il*. Ash-Shāfi'ī, by his synoptic comprehension and vast

¹ Arberry remarks about this manuscript: "Only one copy of the work has survived, and that by the hand of the well-known pupil of Ibn 'Arabī, Isma'il ibn Sawdakin (d. 646-1248), so that it is permissible to conjecture that the book was a guarded secret of the Ṣūfis, who communicated it to one another privately, without divulging its contents to the general public." See Al-Kharrāz Introduction, p. vii of *Kitāb al-Sidq*. See also MS., fol. 31.

² About other preserved fragments of al-Junayd's writings see p. 81. The Istanbul MS. is of first-rate importance.

learning, was able to initiate principles of Muslim jurisprudence which were so fundamental that later generations of jurists were happy to elaborate them, but unable either to add to them or change them. It is in this sense that al-Junayd is the father of ṣūfism.

PART I

THE LIFE, PERSONALITY AND
WRITINGS OF AL-JUNAYD

CHAPTER I

AL-JUNAYD'S EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Al-Junayd's Family

Though Abu-l-Qāsim al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Junayd al-Khazzāz al-Qawāriri was born and brought up in Baghdād, the fact that his ancestors came from the Persian town of Nihāwand in the province of Jibāl was known to his contemporaries in Baghdād.¹ Nihāwand was considered to be the most ancient town in the province of Jibāl and to have existed even before the flood. It was conquered by the Arabs between 17 and 21 A.H. (638/641 A.D.) at the time of 'Umar. In this campaign the Arabs found themselves faced by a strongly fortified town reputed to contain great treasure. Its conquest was achieved only at the price of heavy sacrifices and cost the conquerors the life of their general, Nu'aym ibn Mukarram al-Muzani. But the victory stood the Arab cause in good stead, since Nihāwand opened the road into the interior and beyond. Its name is coupled with deeds of heroism and rich booty in the pages of Arab history. The Persian writers held that Nihāwand was both one of the most beautiful and also one of the coldest places in Persia.² The town owed its wealth to the fruitful soil of the surrounding districts, which was put to good use in the production of vegetables and fruit. Its inhabitants were shrewd merchants who were able to build up a considerable export trade with Mesopotamia. According to

Khaṭīb, *Tārikh Baghdād*, 7, 242.

¹ Ibn al-Faḥr *Kitāb al-Bulḍān* (Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, ed. de Goeje), p. 258, 16. Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Bulḍān*, v. 8, p. 329.

Iṣṭakhri: "Nihāwand is situated on a hill and the houses are of clay. There are fine gardens and many fruits which, on account of their quality and profusion, are exported to Mesopotamia."¹ Ibn Ḥawqal, too, calls Nihāwand an important town with much trade and fine agricultural land.²

In view of the foregoing, it is not unlikely that al-Junayd's ancestors, as citizens of Nihāwand, came originally from hardy mountain stock and had, as is customary in the East, probably been engaged in the export trade to Mesopotamia for several generations. It is possible that trade relations with Baghdād may have induced the family to emigrate there, but we do not know exactly when they settled in the metropolis. However, the occupations of the immediate members of al-Junayd's family are known to us from their names. Al-Junayd's father is referred to as a Qawāriri, i.e. a glass merchant; al-Junayd himself is known as a Khazzāz, i.e. a merchant of raw silk; while his uncle, as-Sari, is called as-Saqāṭi, i.e. a merchant dealing in spices and seasonings. Al-Junayd, as we see, was brought up in the milieu of merchants from merchant stock. Little is known about his childhood, beyond the fact that his father died while he was still a boy. His maternal uncle, as-Saqāṭi, took the orphan into his home and brought him up.

The Date of Al-Junayd's Birth

Though the date of al-Junayd's birth is not recorded, the date of his death is given as 296, 297 or 298 A.H. (908, 909, 910 A.D.). It is the last date which is best attested.³ As we shall see later, over and above his preoccupations as a merchant, he studied law and ḥadīth in his youth with Abū Thawr, who died in 240 A.H. We are told that he was twenty when he studied under him and, since this discipline takes from three to five years, the most likely date of birth is 215 A.H. After completing these studies, he turned to ṣūfism, when he sat under al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī. Judging from the profound comprehension which al-Junayd acquired of al-Muḥāsibī's teaching, the respect in

¹ Iṣṭakhri, *Masālik al-Mamālik* (B.G.A.), v. 7, p. 199, 15.

² Ibn Ḥawqal, *Al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* (B.G.A.), v. 2, p. 258, 18.

³ See Khaṭīb, *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 7, p. 248. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, v. 6, p. 105. Ibn Khallikān, v. 1, p. 147.

Sam'ani, *Ansāb*, p. 464 B. (The night of NAWRŪZ, 298 A.H.)

which al-Junayd always held his teacher and the extreme difficulty of the subject, it is not too much to assume that al-Junayd came to al-Muḥāsibī as a man of thirty and studied for some ten years. On the basis of the foregoing, I am inclined to the opinion that al-Junayd was born round about 210 A.H. This would make him about ninety when he died, and we may note in passing that there was a strain of longevity in the family on his mother's side, since his uncle, as-Saqāṭi, was in the nineties when he died.

EARLY EDUCATION OF AL-JUNAYD

Fiqh and Ḥadīth

As has been mentioned, he began his studies with law and *ḥadīth* (Tradition of and about the Prophet) on the advice of his uncle. Al-Junayd relates that one day as he was leaving his uncle, Sari as-Saqāṭi, asked him to whose *majlis* (assembly) he was going. He replied: "To that of Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī." Sari then said: "Yes, go and accept his learning and his discipline, but beware of his speculative reasoning and his refutation of the Mu'tazilites." "And, as I was going out," adds al-Junayd, "I heard Sari say, 'May God make you a traditionalist who is a ṣūfī, and not a ṣūfī who is a traditionalist!'"¹ Makkī goes on to explain that knowledge of the tradition and the Sunna should come first, and that afterwards, by practising asceticism and devotion, al-Junayd might advance in knowledge of ṣūfism and become an expert ṣūfī, but that the reverse process of trying to attain to the higher degree of ṣūfism without being well grounded in orthodox theology was dangerous. On this point we have al-Junayd's further testimony: "I studied law according to the school of such authorities on ḥadīth as Abū 'Ubayd and Abū Thawr, and later I associated with al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī and Sari ibn Mughallas. That has been the reason of my success, because our knowledge must be controlled by going back to the Qur'ān and the Sunna. Whoever has not learned the Qur'ān by heart and has not formally studied ḥadīth, and has not learned law before embarking on ṣūfism, is a man who has no right to lead."²

¹ Makkī, *Qūt l-Qulūb*, vol. 2, p. 35. Cf. Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, fol. 112.

² Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, v. 2, p. 36.

So we see that al-Junayd devoted himself at the beginning to orthodox studies, the Ḥadīth and Sunna, which stood him in good stead both in creating his style and in the evolution and crystallization of his thought when he became a *ṣūfī* and taught mysticism. Thus, the roots of his *ṣūfism* were laid deep in the orthodox tradition and, as a result, his teaching was acceptable to *sūnnī* and *ṣūfī* alike in his day and a prized heritage for posterity.¹

We see that he studied jurisprudence under the recognized authorities on it at this time in Baghdād. Ibn Khallikān writes: "Al-Junayd studied law under Abū Thawr. Some say that he took the doctrine of Sulaymān al-Thawrī and the jurist Ibn Surayj was his associate and friend."² Abū Thawr Ibrāhīm b. Khālīd al-Kalbī al-Baghdādī, who died in 240 A.H., was the outstanding jurist of his day in Baghdād. Abu Thawr began to practise as a member of the 'Irāqī school of thought. This school differed from the traditionalist school of Hijāz in so far as its members were more open to juristic analysis, more aware of foreign legal traditions, and giving expression to its appreciation of precedent by collecting and recording new cases. It was only when Shāfi'ī came to Baghdād that Abū Thawr, under his influence, left the school of 'Irāq for the school of Tradition (*Ḥadīth*). He may perhaps not have been equally accomplished as a teacher of the *ḥadīth* as he was a jurist. Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, in his book "al-Jarḥ wa'l-Ta'dīl" ("Refutation and Justification," a work assessing the relative merits of the traditionalists), said of him: "He was a man whose conclusions were based on theory rather than *ḥadīth*; sometimes he was right; sometimes he was wrong. His place is not amongst the widely versed traditionalists."³

There is reason to believe that, had al-Junayd not turned to mysticism, he would have been a distinguished jurist. Subkī says in his praise that, when only twenty years old, he sat at the feet of Abū Thawr, and that in this circle his juristic decisions were recognized.⁴ It should be noted in passing that

¹ Ibn Taymiya, *Minhāj al-Sunna*, v. 3, p. 86. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikin*, v. 1, p. 137.

² Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v. 1, p. 146.

³ Sam'ani, p. 485.

⁴ Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, v. 2, p. 28.

the middle thirties would to-day be regarded as a very early age to achieve this level of juristic maturity.

The biographers classify al-Junayd as a "Thawrī." Some hold that this designation points to his teacher, Abū Thawr; others hold that it refers to the legal school of Abū Sufyān al-Thawrī (161 A.H., 111 A.D.), which was well known and widely followed in Baghdād for a number of generations.¹ According to Abu'l Maḥāsīn al-Taghribardī, the former opinion is the right one.² From the fact that only few *ḥadīths* of his are preserved, we may see that in this respect al-Junayd resembled his teacher Abū Thawr.³

His other associate, Ibn Surayj, the jurist, was a Shafī'ite. It is said that he was the first to "open the door of thinking," and taught people dialectic in law.⁴ It is also said that during the third century three men stood out in different spheres: Ibn Surayj in law, Ash'arī in theology and Nasā'ī in *ḥadīth*.⁵

Ibn Surayj appears to have been a close friend of al-Junayd. It is said that once, when Ibn Surayj had delivered a fine discourse, one of the circle expressed his admiration and asked: "Where did you get the idea?" He replied: "It was one of the benefits I had from my sessions with al-Junayd."⁶ It is also related that Ibn Surayj said: "Before to-day, when you told me, I did not know the answers to these questions." Al-Junayd replied: "God inspired me and put the words into my mouth. They come neither from books nor from study. They are grace from God." Ibn Surayj asked: "How did you attain this insight?" and al-Junayd replied: "It comes from my communion with God for forty years."⁷ The intimacy which these stories presuppose gives good reason for the assumption that al-Junayd's authority and standing were recognized by the leading men of his day. Ibn Surayj, who died in 306 A.H., wrote several books which are no longer extant.

¹ Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, v. 11, p. 114.

² *Nujūm*, v. 3, p. 169.

³ *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 7, p. 242.

Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, v. 2, p. 33.

⁴ Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, v. 2, p. 87.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶ Qushayrī, p. 19.

⁷ Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, v. 11, p. 114.

'Ilm al-Kalām

That al-Junayd was not a scholastic theologian is implied by the story of the advice given him by his uncle, Saqaṭī, already quoted. Ibn Khaldūn relates of al-Junayd that one day he passed by a group of *mutakallimīn* (scholastic theologians), who were expounding their opinions with a great flow of words. He asked: "Who are these people?" He was answered: "These are people who use proofs to show that God has none of the attributes in order of that which is created and no signs of imperfection." Al-Junayd then said: "To deny a fault which could not possibly exist, is a fault (of judgment)."¹

We have stories of *mutakallimīn* of the time who met and admired al-Junayd. We are told that Abū al-Qāsim al-Kalbī, a leading Mu'tazilite, said: "I saw in Baghdād a *shaykh* called al-Junayd. My eyes have never seen anyone like him. The writers come to him for style; the philosophers seek him for his profound thoughts; the poets come to him for imagery; the theologians for the content of his discourse; and the level of his talk was always higher than theirs in perception, eloquence and learning."²

We read, moreover, an apocryphal story that, when Ibn Kullāb³ had written his book refuting the other sects, he asked: "Is there any other sect I have not yet refuted?" They answered him: "Yes, the *ṣūfīs*." He asked: "Who is their leader?" and they answered: "Al-Junayd." So Ibn Kullāb went to al-Junayd and asked him about his doctrine. Al-Junayd said to him: "Our doctrine is the separation of the eternal from that which was originated in time; abnegation of fellow-men brethren and native places, and no thought of the past or the future." When Ibn Kullāb heard this answer he was amazed, and said: "This is a thing which we cannot discuss or treat dialectically." After that, he attended al-Junayd's circle and asked him about *tawḥīd* (unification). Al-Junayd answered him with an expression showing knowledge of the mysteries and wisdom. Ibn Kullāb asked him to repeat it, but al-Junayd merely spoke another sentence and, when Kullāb asked al-Junayd

to explain it to him, he was told: "If it came from my own tongue I could dictate it to you." And then Ibn Kullāb recognized al-Junayd and acknowledged the sublimity of his inspiration.¹ That it is unlikely that Ibn Kullāb actually had dealings with al-Junayd we know from al-Subkī. He says: "I saw the note of al-Dhahabī on this story which said . . . 'this is wrong, because Ibn Kullāb lived in the time of Ibn Ḥanbal; how could he, therefore, have met al-Junayd?' What al-Dhahabī said is quite true, since it appears that Ibn Kullāb died shortly after 240 A.H."² However, the anecdote is significant in so far as it reflects a view widely held by later generations both of al-Junayd's authority as a teacher and his attitude to the *mutakallimīn*.

240
500
700

¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* (ed. Quatremere), v. 3, p. 43.

² Khāṭib, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, v. 7, p. 243.

³ Abū Muḥammad b. Kullāb, 'Abdullāh b. Sa'id al Qaṭṭān.

¹ Yāfī, *Mir'āt al-Janān*, v. 11, p. 233.

² Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, v. 2, p. 51.

CHAPTER II

JUNAYD'S MYSTICAL SOURCES

AL-JUNAYD'S TEACHERS IN *Ṣūfīsm*

As al-Junayd indicates, his first acquaintance with the mystic way was in his uncle as-Saqaṭī's house when he was a little boy. He says: "When I was seven years old and playing in front of Saqaṭī, when a party of men were with my uncle who were talking about 'gratitude to God' (Shukr), my uncle said to me: 'Oh boy, what is gratitude to God?' and I replied to him that 'gratitude was that one should not disobey God who bestows gifts.' Whereupon my uncle said: 'It may well be, my boy, that your gift from God will be your tongue.'" Al-Junayd continues: "My eyes still fill with tears when I think of what as-Saqaṭī said."¹

Sarī as-Saqaṭī

As already stated, Sarī as-Saqaṭī was a merchant who dealt in spices and seasonings. One day, when a fire occurred in the bazaar, he was told that his shop had been burned. He replied: "Then I am freed from the care of it." Afterwards, it was discovered that his shop had not been burned, although all the shops surrounding it had been destroyed. On discovering this, Sarī gave all he possessed to the poor and devoted himself exclusively to *ṣūfīsm*.²

As-Saqaṭī attained the age of ninety-eight years, as we learn from al-Junayd: "I have seen no one more bent on worship than as-Saqaṭī—in the whole ninety-eight years of his life it was unknown for him to lie down, except in his last illness."³ He died about 253 A.H.⁴ His birth thus should have been about 153 A.H. This means that he lived in the first period of the

'Abbāsīd dynasty. He lived through the reigns of seven or eight Khalīfs and was a witness of all those great events in thought and philosophy which took place in the golden age of 'Irāq. As-Saqaṭī was famous for his devotion and his abstinence.—*Ward*. On this subject many stories are related. When his name was mentioned to the *Imām* ibn Ḥanbal, he remarked: "Oh you mean the Shaykh who is well-known for his scrupulousness about food?"⁵ As-Sulamī said of him: "Sarī was the first in Baghdād to teach Unification (*taḥḥīd*) through the way of mysticism, and the first to teach the knowledge of reality; he was also the leader of the Baghdādīs in the symbolic utterances (*ishārāt*).⁶ Qushayrī said: "He was unique in his time in devoutness and abstinence, in his high state of mind and in the knowledge of unification."⁷

It appears that as-Saqaṭī's reputation was high both with the leaders, governors, generals and scholars of his time, and also with the people at large. Later he withdrew from the public eye and spent his time with a selected few.⁴ Among his pupils, apart from al-Junayd, were an-Nūrī, Ibn Masrūq aṭ-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Saqaṭī, Ibrāhīm al-Makhramī, al-'Abbās al-Shaklī.⁵

With regard to the teaching which as-Saqaṭī imparted to al-Junayd, it seems that he carried on discussions with him and put questions to him as Socrates did with his pupils. Al-Junayd says: "When as-Saqaṭī wants me to profit by his teaching he puts questions to me."⁸ We have an illustration of this method in the following incident as described by al-Junayd: "Sarī questioned me one day about love and I answered: 'Some say that love is identity of feeling, others say it is to prefer another to oneself, while others say something else.'" Sarī pinched the skin of his arm, which was so taut and dry that he was not able to pull it out, and he said: "By God, if I said that this skin dried on these bones through loving Him, I should be

¹ Qushayrī, p. 81.

² Hujwiri, p. 110.

³ Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, v. 9, p. 192.

⁴ Ibid., according to Qushayrī in 257. See p. 10. According to Ibn 'Asākir in 251. (See *Tabdhīb*, v. 6, p. 79.)

⁵ Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, v. 10, p. 126.

⁶ Sulamī, fol. 10a.

⁷ Qushayrī, p. 10.

⁸ Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabdhīb*, v. 6, p. 77.

⁹ Khaṭīb, v. 9, p. 190.

¹⁰ Qushayrī, p. 82.

telling the truth.”¹ On another occasion al-Junayd relates: “I came to as-Sarī one day and found him different from usual, and I asked him: ‘What is the matter?’ He replied: ‘A young man came to me and asked about repentance. I answered: “Repentance is not to forget your sin.” The young man objected and said: “On the contrary, repentance is to forget your sin.”’ Al-Junayd said to as-Sarī: “What the young man said is my own view.”’ As-Sarī asked me: “Why?” and I replied: “If you have been on bad terms with God and are afterwards raised to being on good terms, to think of your former state is bad.”’ As-Sarī was silent.² That as-Sarī recognized the stature of al-Junayd is evident from the following anecdote. One day as-Sarī was asked whether the status of a disciple could be higher than that of his spiritual mentor, and he replied: “Yes, there is manifest proof of this; the status of al-Junayd is above mine.”³ We have another instance in the fact that, when as-Sarī was dying, al-Junayd said to him: “Oh, as-Sarī, the people will not see anyone like you when you are gone.” As-Sarī answered: “But they will not see anyone as kind and gentle as you are.”⁴

Al-Junayd tells us that, at the beginning, he was reluctant to become a teacher as long as as-Sarī was alive, until one night he dreamt that the Apostle of God said to him: “Oh, al-Junayd, speak to the people, for God hath made thy words the means of saving a multitude of mankind.” When he awoke, the thought occurred to him that his status was superior to that of as-Sarī’s, since the Apostle had commanded him to preach. At daybreak as-Sarī sent a disciple to al-Junayd with the following message: “You would not discourse to your disciples when they urged you to do so, and you rejected the intercession of the Shaykhs of Baghdād and my personal entreaty. Now that the Apostle has commanded you, obey his orders.” Al-Junayd said: “My former fancy went out of my head. I perceived that as-Sarī was acquainted with my outward and inward thoughts in all circumstances, and that his status was above mine, since he was acquainted with my secret thoughts, whereas

I was ignorant of his status. I went to him and begged his pardon and asked him how he knew that I had dreamed of the Apostle. He answered: ‘I dreamed of God, who told me that He had sent the Apostle to bid you preach.’”¹

As-Sarī, like Socrates, has left nothing in writing. Most of what we have of his sayings have come down to us from al-Junayd. It may be that sometimes he put his own thoughts into the mouth of as-Sarī. Seeing that as-Sarī had such a tremendous influence on al-Junayd, we realize that, without al-Junayd, we would know nothing of the importance of as-Sarī. If we wish to picture the relationship between as-Saqatī and al-Junayd, we may compare them with Socrates and Plato. Al-Junayd worked out the systematic structure of ṣūfism and put it in writing. As-Saqatī spoke on the problems of ṣūfism in an almost platonic dialogue. He used to hold discussions, put up questions and lead his circle to an appreciation of the issues involved. He was without question a practising ṣūfī.

We may regard as-Saqatī as the founder of the Ṣūfī School of Baghdād. This school differed from contemporary ṣūfī schools in Syria and in Khorasan. The Baghdād school’s main topic was Unification, *Tawḥīd*, and it developed the “knowledge” of Unification. The school is distinguished by its symbolic expressions and by its discussions on the mystic state and station of the ṣūfī. The members of the school are, therefore, called “The Masters of Unification,” *Arbāb al-Tawḥīd*, like al-Junayd, an-Nūrī and ash-Shibli.² This school has another feature, in that the ‘Irāqīs were famous by virtue of their eloquence. Al-Junayd remarked on this, stating: “Syria is the home of chivalry, ‘Irāq of eloquence and Khorāsān of sincerity.”³ We are told that as-Sarī heard the great traditionalists of his time, such as al-Fuḍayl, Hushaym, Ibn ‘Ayyāsh, Yazīd b. Hārūn, Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna and others. The implication is, then, that as-Sarī had had the benefit of the academic training available in his time and that his status in the contemporary academic world was not without recognition. His ṣūfism was, therefore, based on academic knowledge and developed in keeping with

¹ Ibid., p. 10.

² Ibid., p. 47.

³ Hujwiri, p. 128.

⁴ Ibn ‘Asākir, v. 6, p. 79.

Hujwiri, p. 129.

arrā), page of *Luma* (Arberry ed.), p. 12.

Hushayrī, p. 103.

the principles of academic interpretation of holy writ. It was the esoteric nature of the subject which tended to be new in Islām rather than the method employed in reaching his conclusions.

Ma'rūf al-Karkhī

As-Sarī was a pupil of the great ṣūfī Abū Maḥfūz Ma'rūf ibn Firūz al-Karkhī (died 200 or 201 A.H.). As-Sarī used to say: "What I have learned is from the blessing of my association with Ma'rūf."¹ Ma'rūf was of Persian descent. It is said that he was a client (*Mawlā*) of the Imām 'Alī ibn Mūsa al-Riḍā and, having been a non-Moslem, accepted Islām at the hands of al-Riḍā. Ma'rūf lived in Baghdād in the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd in the Karkh quarter of the city, and thus was generally called Ma'rūf of Karkh. Abū 'l-Maḥāsīn Taghribardī says that his parents were Sabeans coming from the region of Wāsiṭ; but al-Daqqāq said that they were Christians.² These Sabeans or Mandaeans or Elkhasāites (the Sabeans of the Qur'ān) had their centre in the marsh land between Baṣra and Wāsiṭ, where some of them still survive. They were called by the Moslems the *Mughtasilah* (Washers), on account of their frequent ceremonial ablutions. Their founder is said to have been Elkhasāi and, as their name Mandaeans (gnostics) implies, they are the remnants of a very ancient gnostic sect.³

According to Ibn-an-Nadīm in the *Fihrist*, Mani, the founder of the Manicheans, was in his youth one of the *Mughtasila*.⁴ Accordingly, Professor Kessler formulated his theory that the doctrines of the *Mughtasila* were the principal source of Mani's system.⁵ Al-Birūnī says that the Sabeans in Samarkand were the survivors of the Manicheans in the lands of Islām.⁶

R. Hartmann points out many Mandaean influences in ṣūfī doctrine and terminology.⁷ To support this, we may refer to

¹ Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyā*, v. 10, p. 123.

² Nujūm, v. 2, p. 167.

³ Nicholson, JRAS, 1906, p. 319. The Sabeans according to Nöldeke (*Mandäische Grammatik*, p. 1) were not Mandaeans but more likely Elkhasaites.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 457.

⁵ See Legge, *Forerunner and Rival of Christianity*, v. 2, p. 305.

⁶ Birūnī, *Al-Āthār al-Bāqiyā*, p. 209.

⁷ *Der Islam*, v. 6, p. 46.

the ideas of Ḥaqq and Ṣidq, which appear again and again in Manichean literature. We find that they also occur very often in a particular sense in the works of al-Junayd, as in his "Book of Ṣidq" and his book of "Ulūhiyya." It may well be that al-Junayd took these notions and terms through Saqaṭī from Ma'rūf. At any rate, we can see in the sayings of Ma'rūf that he used the terms *Ḥaqq* and *Ṣidq*. It is well known Ma'rūf, as-Saqaṭī and al-Junayd were the first to speak in Baghdād of Ḥaqqā'iq.

There is also the question whether there has been a Neo-platonic influence through these Mandaeans or Sabeans which reached the ṣūfīs. Hartmann maintains that the Neo-platonists were very scholarly, whereas ṣūfism rose from the people.¹ But, if it be true that these Mandaeans from the lower Euphrates marsh-lands were rather primitive sectarians, this is not the case with our ṣūfīs. There were, on the contrary, amongst them the most scholarly and widely cultured personalities of their time. It would be certainly worth while to raise the question whether there have been Neo-platonic influences on the early ṣūfīs. The Christian Syriac theological writers, who flourished widely in the centuries preceding the rise of Islām, were deeply steeped in the Neo-platonic current of thought. One may think of Dionysius the Arcopagite, and of Stephan bar Sudaili, a Syrian Christian mystic and pantheist (considered a heretic by contemporary churchmen), who taught and wrote before and about 500 A.D. in Edessa and Palestine. His work of mystical essays, called the "Book of the Holy Hierotheos," addressed to a disciple, stresses the secret character of these teachings. It interprets the Old and New Testament in a Neo-platonic sense, and is a witness for us of Christian Neo-platonism in Syria—rendered accessible by the translation of F. S. Marsh.² The Christian Neo-platonic influence on later ṣūfī thought has been further investigated by A. G. Wensinck in his edition, translation and commentary of "The Book of the Dove," written by Bar Hebraeus in 1278 A.D. One is tempted to hazard the conjecture that the long development of Neo-platonic thought in the Christian circles of Asia Minor was contempor-

¹ p. 62.

² *Book of the Holy Hierotheos*, translated by F. S. Marsh, 1927.

aneous, but not intimately connected with developing ṣūfī doctrine. One looks rather to Plotinus as a probable inspiration to both schools, and to Syriac Christian writings as parallels of interest rather than direct sources of doctrine.

In fact, when we study the *Rasā'il* (letters) of al-Junayd, we find what seems to be Neo-platonic elements. To give a few examples only: The theory of the pre-existence and post-existence of the soul before and after life in this earthly body, as the reason for the longing of the soul in man to return to its origin. The nature of the "first separation from God" and of the "second separation" after mystical union. The deep search into the problem of essence and attributes, and of reality. God is the only reality, we are but phenomenal. Human attributes are only impressions (*rasm*) and ephemeral, mirroring faintly God's attributes, which are eternal. Neo-platonic ideas were widespread at a later period in Baghdād and made their contribution to the development of Islāmic philosophy. How far did they influence al-Junayd, his contemporaries and his teachers?

We may think of such an important work of Greek philosophy as the book known as *Aristotalis Uthulujiya—Theologia Aristotelis*,¹ which is preserved to us only in its Arabic translation. The title of this book states it contains a commentary of Porphyry on the Theology of Aristotle, translated by the Syrian 'Abd al-Masīh ibn 'Abd Ullah al-Ḥimṣī al Nā'imī (a Syrian Christian), and checked by al-Kindī (the early Muslim philosopher and physicist) for the Khalif al-Mu'taṣim (218 A.H.—251 A.H.). The contents of this book, which was translated into Latin in the sixteenth century, and some fifty years ago into German by F. Dieterici, shows that we have before us not a work of Aristotle, but a treatise of Porphyry, the disciple of Plotinus and commentator of Aristotle. Within the framework of the philosophical and cosmological system of Aristotle, the author gives a summary of the whole authentic philosophical system of Plotinus.

His remarkable work on the God-head, the created Universe

¹ Die sogenannte Theologie des Aristoteles, ed. and trans. Fr. Dieterici, Leipzig 1882–83; cf. Brockelmann, Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur, Sup. I, p. 364.

and the soul very skilfully blends the teachings of Aristotle and of Plotinus. The formal system of the teaching reminds us more of Aristotle than the poetical, spontaneous style of Plotinus.

This work, as the dates of al-Kindī and Khalif al-Mu'taṣim indicate, must have reached the intellectuals of Baghdād in the generation before al-Junayd. Either the book itself or the ideas it contained may well have become known to the ṣūfis at that time. There are, however, no indications in al-Junayd's letters that he himself had read the book. He was not interested in systematic philosophy or in cosmology. The contents of the book which were of significance to the mystics must have reached him by word of mouth. It is sufficient here to note that the dates allow the surmise of influence through oral discussion. A more detailed analysis of comparative doctrine will be given later.

To return to Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, the following anecdote at once shows the significance of his teachings and the atmosphere in which al-Junayd developed.

"It was reported that whenever food was presented to Ma'rūf as a gift he always accepted and ate it. Someone said to him: 'Your brother Bishr b. al-Ḥārith always refuses such food,' and Ma'rūf replied: 'Abstaining causes my brother's hands to be tied, whilst Gnosis causes my hands to be stretched forth. I am only a guest in the house of my Lord . . . when He feeds me, I eat; when He does not, I have to be patient. I have neither objection nor choice.'"¹ Here we meet for the first time in ṣūfī literature a peculiar and original conception of abstinence. The ramifications of this conception are both deep and significant. Similar ideas can also be found in Saqāṭī and al-Junayd. Here are further examples:

A friend of Ma'rūf's asked him: "What has impelled you to the worship of God and caused you to withdraw?" He was silent. The friend continued: "Is it the thought of death?" "No," was the reply, "for what is death?" "The thought of the grave perhaps?" asked the friend; again, "No, for what is the grave?" The friend continued: "Perhaps the fear of

¹ *Qulūb*, v. 4, p. 61.

Hell and the desire for Paradise?" Ma'rūf answered: "Whatever all this may be, it is all contained in the hand of God. When you love Him, He will make you forget all these; when you become acquainted with Him, He will protect you from all these things."¹

'Ali b. al-Muwaffaq related the following: "I dreamt I had entered Paradise. I saw there a man at a table, two angels were beside him, one on his left and one on his right; they gave him many kinds of food, which he ate. I saw another man who stood at the gates of Paradise; he looked at the faces of the people; some he allowed to enter, others he turned away. I left Paradise and continued to the Holy Court. There I saw the Pavilion of the Throne and a man was gazing steadfastly towards God—his eyelid did not flicker once. I asked Riḍwān: 'Who is this?' and he replied: 'This is Ma'rūf al-Karkhī who worships God, not through fear of Hell, nor desire for Paradise, but only for love of Him, and so God allows him to look at Him until the day of Resurrection.' I then asked: 'Who are the other two men?' and he replied: 'One is your brother Bishr b. al-Ḥārith and the other is Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.'"²

Anṣarī related: "I dreamt that I saw Ma'rūf al-Karkhī before the throne of God and heard God say to his angels: 'Who is this?' They answered: 'Thou knowest best, O Lord! This is Ma'rūf al-Karkhī; he is intoxicated by Thee and will not recover his senses, except by meeting Thee face to face.'"³

One day Ma'rūf said to his nephew, Ya'qūb: "When you desire anything from God, invoke my name in your appeal to Him."⁴

When we consider the teachings and sayings of the various ṣūfī Shaykhs of this period, we see how close was the relationship between these three personalities, Ma'rūf, Saqaṭī and al-Junayd; their attitude, character, purpose and mystic way are essentially one and the same. It consists mainly of Theosophy, the apprehension of divine reality and Unification, whereas most other ṣūfīs had, in their mystical teachings, a more limited

¹ Ibid., v. 3, p. 82.

² *Qūt al-Qulūb*, v. 3, p. 83.

³ *Ḥilyāt al-Awliyā*, v. 8, p. 366. In Qushayrī, p. 11, this dream related from Sari as-Saqaṭī.

⁴ *Ḥilyāt al-Awliyā*, v. 8, p. 364. In Qushayrī also this saying related from Saqaṭī, p. 11.

and a less idealistic objective. They seem to have stressed the importance of religious practice rather than mystical theory.

We learn from different sources that Ma'rūf was an associate of Dāwūd al-Ṭā'i (died 165 A.H.) and that Dāwūd al-Ṭā'i derived from Ḥabīb al-'Ajamī (died 120 A.H.), who derived from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (died 110 A.H.), who derived from 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (died 40 A.H.).¹ Yet this chain of mystic tradition is very doubtful, as it has not been proved by the historians that Ma'rūf was ever the associate of Dāwūd al-Ṭā'i, nor that Dāwūd had met Ḥabīb al-'Ajamī. It is not correct either that al-Ḥasan met 'Alī. He met only his associates, as he was a child when 'Alī died. Thus this chain of teacher and pupil is not valid.²

Other historians give us a different chain of tradition for Ma'rūf. In the *Fibriṣt*, Ibn an-Nadīm says, quoting Abū Ishāq, that he learned from the writings of Ja'far al-Khuldī, and also heard direct from him, that he took mysticism from al-Junayd, who derived it from as-Saqaṭī, who derived it from Ma'rūf, who derived it from Farqad al-Sabakhī (died 131 A.H.), who derived it from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who derived it from Anas Ibn Mālīk (died 90 A.H.).³

Abu Ya'qūb Farqad al-Sabakhī al-Baṣrī,⁴ the teacher of Ma'rūf in this chain, was a famous ascetic in his time; he was also a traditionalist and related some traditions from Anas b. Mālīk, Sa'id b. Jubayr and from other "*Ṭābi'ūn*" who conversed with the companions of the Prophet; but the leading traditionalists did not approve of Farqad's tradition and refused to receive it from him.⁵ What should be noted about him is that he was originally a Christian from Armenia who later became a convert to Islām.⁶ As he died in 131 A.H. and Ma'rūf died in 200 A.H., it is very doubtful if Ma'rūf could have associated

¹ See *Kitāb asrār al-Tawḥīd*, p. 18, 38. Qushayrī, p. 134.

² Ibn Taymīya, *Minḥāj al-Sunna*, v. 4, p. 135, f.

³ *Fibriṣt*, p. 260.

⁴ السنجي بالنون والهمزة السبغى بالباء والقائه

⁵ as it is corrected in *Mushtabāh* of Dhahabī, p. 253, and in *Tuhfat Dhawī al-'Irāq*, p. 161. The mistake may have occurred from the copying. (See *Mizān*, v. 2, p. 327. Nicholson,

R.A.S.)

⁶ *Madharāt al-Dhahab*, v. 1, p. 181.

⁷ *Madharāt al-Dhahab*, v. 2, p. 327.

with Farqad and learned from a man who died seventy years before his own death.

On the surface this chain appears more likely than the other. But neither has an historical appeal. There is no circumstantial evidence of these associations between pupil and teacher, nor are any literary similarities adduced as a proof. Such chains of tradition for *ṣūfis* were often compiled at a much later date in order to prove their authority. They are, at any rate, of small account to the historian.¹

Al-Muḥāsibī

The house of as-Saqatī was a meeting place for mystics, where they could discuss their problems at their leisure. As-Saqatī's personality appears to have attracted the leading mystical personalities of his day to his home. This provided young al-Junayd with the opportunity to meet these distinguished men, to hear them discuss and at times to be himself drawn into their discussion. It appears that it was in this way that al-Junayd got to know many of these mystics, whose teachings and aphorisms made a great impression on him.

Amongst these men was the famous mystic Abu 'Abdullah al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī,² a friend of al-Saqatī, who visited him often. Al-Junayd relates: "Ḥārith came to our house and said: 'Come out with me, let us go for a walk.'" And al-Junayd continues: "I said to him: 'Will you drag me forth from my life of retirement, in which I feel secure, out on to the highroads with their risks, and distractions for the senses?' He said: 'Come out with us, never fear!' So I went forth with him and the road was completely deserted; we saw nothing objectionable. And when we arrived at the place where he was accustomed to sit with his friends and discuss with them,

¹ Ibn Khaldūn says:

”حتى لقد جعلوا مستند طريقهم في لباس الخرفة أن علياً ألبسها
للحسن البصري وأخذ عليه العهد بالتزام الطريقة واتمهل ذلك
عندهم بالمجنيد من شيوخهم ولا يعلم هذا أحد على وجه صحيح

Muqaddima (ed. Quatrimere), v. 2, p. 164.

² Al-Muḥāsibī was born towards A.H. 165 (A.D. 781) at Baṣra; he was an Arab. Later he came to Baghdād and settled there.

he bade me question him, but I said: 'I have no questions to ask you.' Then he said: 'Ask me about anything that comes into your mind.' Now questions crowded in on me, and I asked him about them and he gave me answers to them straight away. Then he departed to his house and set them down in writing."¹

From this story we see the type of relationship which obtained between Ḥārith and al-Junayd. In his youth al-Junayd liked to be alone so that he could meditate in retirement. It is to this period that the following story probably belongs. Al-Junayd said: "As-Saqatī remarked to me: 'I heard that you had a gathering around you in the mosque.' I said to him: 'Yes, they were my friends. We talked together in a scholarly way and benefited from one another's knowledge.' And as-Saqatī replied: 'Oh, Abu'l Qāsim, I see that you are beginning to spend your time with the common people.'"² Muḥāsibī, however, appears not to have seen any harm in his mixing with people. Al-Junayd relates that at that time he often used to say to Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī: "My delight is in solitude, but you expose me to the rough and tumble of society." And then he would say to me: "How often will you say to me: 'My delight is in solitude?' Though half of mankind were to draw near to me, I should not find any delight in their company, and though the other half were to keep away from me, I should not feel lonely because of their distance from me!"³ His pre-occupation for retirement is attested again by the quotation in *Ḥushayrī*: "He who would be secure in faith, and confident in body and heart, should keep away from people because the times in which we live are out of joint."⁴

Another aspect of this story is that both the Shaykh and his young pupil profited from the mutual exchange of views. Al-Junayd put his questions to Ḥārith and thus opened both to Ḥārith and for himself the road to new fields of thought. There is little room for doubt that al-Ḥārith found these discussions stimulating and inspiring and that it was his custom, when a new point had been argued, to take to his pen and record,

Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat*, v. 10, p. 255.

Luma', p. 181.

Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat*, v. 10, p. 256.

Id., p. 51.

with that clarity, facility and simple style for which he is justly famous, the conclusions which had been reached. He writes, however, as if the theory were his own. From this it would appear that the association between al-Junayd as an exceptional pupil, and al-Ḥārith as a teacher, took place when the mind of al-Junayd had already reached a degree of maturity.

That al-Junayd was less influenced by al-Ḥārith than he was by his uncle as-Saqaṭī appears as much from the difference in doctrine between them as it does from the difference of attitude towards the significance of ethical conduct. To-day many of the works of al-Ḥārith are extant and in perusing them we understand why al-Ghazzālī describes al-Ḥārith as "outstanding for his contributions in the field of human conduct, as recognizing both the inherent weakness of the soul and the evil of human action."¹ Al-Ghazzālī, for whom the essential works of al-Junayd were not available, studied the works of al-Ḥārith, which were then highly prized. It was in this way that Muḥāsibī's ṣūfism, which al-Ghazzālī fully accepted and used as the foundation of his doctrine, was later to prevail in the Muslim world, especially in the lands of the eastern caliphate, where the popularity and authority of al-Ghazzālī were amply witnessed by the fact that his works were easily available and widely spread. Al-Junayd, his uncle as-Saqaṭī and Ma'rūf, while appreciating the importance of the laws of human conduct as laid down in the *sunna*, were rather more concerned with what might be described as a dynamic, continued and overriding consciousness of the Godhead. But to put the Godhead before *sunna* was fraught with danger and not right for the laity.

Muḥāsibī took an active part in the disputes with the mu'tazilites and was known for his scholastic approach to theology, though, in this field, his pronouncements are justly famed for the exactness of his terminology and the clarity of his arguments, his chief claim to fame will always be his originality as a moralist and psychologist. The care of the soul, in order to lead it on, stage by stage, to a higher state of moral purification, was his main concern. He was not interested in the mystical knowledge of Unification and Annihilation, and

the vague symbolic utterances of his ṣūfī contemporaries. He warned his pupils against expressions which sounded extravagant and might well have proved dangerous. The following story illustrates his attitude: "One day Abū Ḥamza of Baghdād came to the house of Muḥāsibī. Muḥāsibī had a fine house, tastefully decorated, in which he had a king bird which would suddenly burst into song. When Abu Ḥamza heard this song, he cried out: 'It is God.' Muḥāsibī became very angry and snatched up a knife, crying: 'If you don't take back what you said I'll kill you.' Abu Ḥamza replied: 'If you cannot bear what I said just now, why do you live in such a luxurious place and wear such fine clothes?—why don't you start eating black bread and coarse fare?'" By saying this he meant to convey that Muḥāsibī's anger with him showed that he had gone but a short distance on the mystical path. Only those ṣūfīs who had achieved a high degree of spiritual elevation could allow themselves the comfort of luxury without fear of distraction. Abū Ḥamza had interpreted the luxurious state of Muḥāsibī's home as proof that Muḥāsibī had reached the stage of complete indifference to the physical circumstances in which he lived.¹ Hujwiri adds to this story:

"Muḥāsibī's disciples exclaimed: 'Oh, Shaykh, we all know him to be one of the elect Saints and Unitarians; why does the Shaykh regard him with suspicion?' Ḥārith replied: 'I do not suspect him, his opinions are excellent, and I know that he is a profound Unitarian, but why should he do something which resembles the actions of those who believe in incarnation (*bulūliyyūn*) and had the appearance of being derived from their doctrine? If a senseless bird pipes in the manner of birds, why should he behave as though its notes were the voice of God? God is indivisible, and the Eternal does not become incarnate, or united with phenomena, or commingled with them.' When Abū Ḥamza perceived the Shaykh's insight, he said: 'Oh, Shaykh, although I am right in theory, nevertheless, since my action resembled the actions of heretics, I repent and withdraw.'"²

This story tells us much about the attitude of Muḥāsibī. He

¹ Cf. 'Arūsī in *Nata'ij-al-afkār*, v. 1, p. 94.

² Pages from *Luma'*, p. 6.
Kaṭib al-Mahjūb, p. 182.

clearly found himself out of sympathy with the unpredictable, impulsive and solipsist attitude of those mystics whose spiritual intoxication led them to see God in the most mundane phenomena. The mind should be concentrated on God only. His own mind was so clear and sober that such behaviour did not commend itself to him. He did not embark on the esoteric, but limited his teachings to that which was clear and could be discussed in the light of reason. He kept strictly to the orthodox transcendent school of religion which, for the most part, was, and is, generally accepted in Islām. For Muḥāsibī the secret of ṣūfism lay in a profound knowledge of the Qur'ān. Muḥammad had shown the road to God, the sunna made these instructions more explicit, and the main task of a Muslim was to submit to revelation. For al-Junayd, however, the secret of ṣūfism was God—not as an abstract theological conception, tied by the shackles of scholastic theology, but as a personal and impersonal Godhead. Thus it was that al-Muḥāsibī gives us of his best and leads through the maze of revelation step by step and logically to an academically sound mystical conception of the deity; whereas al-Junayd was preoccupied in the first place with a different type of problem. He is in the line of Saqāṭī, Bislāmī and Dhu'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī. He seeks God with real tears and shattering spiritual tribulations and is not satisfied to let the intellect prescribe for the soul. Is it too much to see in this a reflection of Muḥāsibī's Arab descent and academic training, while al-Junayd's quest into the absolute reflects Persian speculation and Persian descent?

E. G. Browne says: "It is with ṣūfīs like Abu Yazid of Bistām, a Persian, and al-Junayd of Baghdād (also, according to Jāmī, a Persian) that, in the latter part of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth centuries of our era, the pantheistic element first makes its definite appearance . . . in short, with these men, whom the ṣūfīs reckoned amongst their greatest teachers, a very thoroughgoing pantheism is superadded to the quietism of the older mystics. The transition is in reality a natural one; from regarding God as the only proper object of love and subject of meditation, man as a mere instrument under His controlling power 'like the pen in the hands of the scribe,' and the Spiritual Life alone as important, to regarding God as

the one Reality and the Phenomenal World as a mere Mirage or Shadow of Being, is but a short step.

"It was certainly the Persian ṣūfīs who went to the greatest lengths in developing the pantheistic aspect of ṣūfism, yet we must bear in mind that, as appears from a study of other forms of mysticism, the step from quietism to pantheism is neither long nor difficult."¹

One cannot help feeling that the step from quietism to pantheism was beyond the range of perception and interest for most Muslims of Arab origin at this time. For the Arabs of the desert and their descendants in the towns it was as natural as it was inevitable to submit to canonical Islām which fully satisfied their religious impulse. Their acceptance of Islām was fraught with neither doubt nor question nor speculation. Thus it was that the speculative religious philosophies of the Persians, Greeks and Indians were alien to them and had almost no significance. The only valid example which they knew of men of other religions submitting to God and devoting their lives to seeking Him was that of the eastern Christian monks. It is, therefore, not surprising that the ṣūfīs of Arab descent may well have been in debt to these monks of the desert for some of their religious ideas as well as their rough woollen garments. The Muslims of Persian descent, however, were attracted by religious speculation and the warp of their Islām was to be woven with the weft of philosophy and of the divine.

Al-Muḥāsibī, as an Arab, seems to have been considerably influenced by his contacts with Christians. Margaret Smith says: "Further, his education most evidently did not exclude contact with Christian and Jewish teaching, from which he draws illustrations and examples for his own purpose, and to which also it may be that he owed his keen sense of the essential need for moral, rather than external, purification."²

Margoliouth³ adduces examples of the influence of the New Testament in Muḥāsibī. But there is no trace of any such influence in al-Junayd.

¹ Browne, "History of Persia," I, pp. 427-8.

² Smith, "Early Mystics of Baghdād," p. 6.

³ See Margoliouth in "Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religion," I, 292 f.

Muḥāsibī was attacked by the school of the *Muḥaddithūn* (Traditionalists). It is reported that Ibn Ḥanbal attacked him because he had paid the mutazilites the compliment of refuting their tenets in scholastic arguments, a worthy enough cause, but vitiated by the means, since in Ibn Ḥanbal's view such argument went a long way to accepting the validity of Kalām.¹ Ibn Zur'a, a great traditionalist, when he was asked about Muḥāsibī and his books, said: "Beware of these books because they are full of innovations (bid'a) and are misleading."² The *Muḥaddithūn*, according to Massignon, objected: to his making a distinction between the conception of 'Ilm and 'Aql, and between Imān and Ma'rifa; because he admitted the created character of the Lafẓ (holy writ); and further because he taught that the chosen in Paradise were called to have direct intercourse with the Divinity; also because he selected, as they said, his proofs, not according to the formal correctness of their "Isnād," but on the basis of their essential significance and their moral influence on the reader.³

The reaction of his contemporaries as above indicated is, of course, significant and calls for a slightly fuller elucidation. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was so convinced that in the sunna lay the essence of Islām, that he not only disallowed the validity of speculation on religious matters, but he felt it to be a positive duty to forbid absolutely any debate or argument on a doctrine of religion. In his eyes Muḥāsibī was a renegade, though he behaved as an orthodox muslim, because he entered into discussions on matters which at that time were not accepted as fit matters for debate. Ibn Zur'a's opposition is again that of the ardent traditionalist for whom a work not on traditional lines is without significance, unreliable and a source of error. Massignon's summary of the opposition with which Muḥāsibī met from the *Muḥaddithūn*, whom we must regard as the leading muslims of the epoch and men of influence both in the religious and the political sphere, reveals the opposition of the puritan to the mystic.

When Muḥāsibī draws a distinction between 'Ilm and 'Aql,

¹ Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, v. 2, p. 39. Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, v. 6, p. 214.

² Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, v. 8, p. 213.

³ Handwörterbuch des Islam, p. 541.

between acquired knowledge and intuitive discrimination, between what is handed down (*manqūl*) and what is deduced (*ma'qūl*), he is accepting the weapons which the mu'tazilites used. When Muḥāsibī recognizes a difference between faith (Imān) and gnosis (Ma'rifa), he is a ṣūfī. In admitting the created character of the words of the Qur'ān (Lafẓ) Muḥāsibī declares his position vis-a-vis the mu'tazilites and says that the words of the Qur'ān (Lafẓ) are created and temporal (makhlūq), whereas what these words convey (ma'nā) is of all time and eternal (qadīm). Direct intercourse with the Divinity in the hereafter is a ṣūfī claim. Eclecticism in tradition (ḥadīth) such as Muḥāsibī practised must appear as meretricious in the eyes of a formal traditionalist. To sum up, then, Muḥāsibī's orthodox traditionalist contemporaries regarded him as suspect primarily because he was not of them, secondarily because he entered the lists against the Mu'tazilites and, in the third place, because his ṣūfism so coloured all he wrote as to vitiate it from the point of view of the sunna.

Ibn Ḥanbal carried his persecution of al-Muḥāsibī to the point of banning his writings and compelling him temporarily to leave Baghdād. He was later forced, through the fanaticism of the numerous followers of Ibn Ḥanbal, to live in retirement in Baghdād. When he died in the year 243 A.H. only four persons attended his funeral.¹

It would appear that al-Junayd was aware of Muḥāsibī's predilection and preoccupation with Kalām (scholastic theology), which had rendered his books suspect in the sight of the Ḥanbalites. For his part, al-Junayd refrained from Kalām and seems always to have followed the advice of his teacher and uncle Saqatī. Though by nature al-Junayd was retiring, his very real appreciation of popular feeling and reaction kept him on a safe path. His caution can be seen from his answer to a question on "retirement." He replied: "Security is achieved only by those who consciously seek it, who do not set themselves up in opposition, who renounce the temptation to seek after what knowledge of Islām forbids."²

¹ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v. 1, p. 158.

² Saqatī, *Luma'*, p. 167.

Muḥammad al-Qaṣṣāb

We know only a few facts concerning Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Qaṣṣāb, the third teacher of al-Junayd. Al-Junayd himself called Qaṣṣāb his "real teacher," and said: "The people connect me mainly with Sarī, but my real teacher was Muḥammad al-Qaṣṣāb."¹ It is a fact, however, that Junayd does not give us so many quotations and incidents relating to Qaṣṣāb as he does of Sarī.

Al-Khaṭīb quotes a saying of Qaṣṣāb's adduced by Junayd. "Junayd said: Our teacher, Abū Ja'far al-Qaṣṣāb, was asked: 'Why does it happen that the members of your circle are detached from the general run of people?' and the reply was: 'There are three circumstances which bring this about. Firstly, God does not wish the elect to have what the laity possess. Had He wished to bestow on the elect what the laity possess, then He would have had to bestow His special privilege on the laity. Secondly, God does not wish to mark the good actions of the elect on the pages of other people. Had He so wished, He would have made them associate with other people. Thirdly, they are a group of men going only towards God; therefore, God withholds everything except Himself and keeps them exclusively for Himself.'"²

This small quotation suggests al-Qaṣṣāb's high spirituality and what a secluded life he led. It is likely that what Junayd learned from him was not commonplace, but rather the secrets reserved for the initiated. Abū Ja'far al-Qaṣṣāb died in 275 A.H.

Ibn al-Karanbī

Al-Junayd was also in continuous contact with the 'Iraḳī scholars and ṣūfīs who lived in Baghdād. Of these 'Iraḳīs with whom he associated, Abū Ja'far al-Karanbī al-Baghdādī³ is said

¹ Khatīb, *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 3, p. 62.

² Ibid.

³ Ibn al-Karanbī ابن الكرنبي as in *Tārikh Baghdād*; in *Luma'* ibn al-Kurrinī

ابن الكرنبي Nicholson has corrected it to ibn al-Karanbī (see *Luma'*, p. 459); in

Talbīs Iblīs ibn al-Koraytī ابن الكرنبي p. 350 in *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, p. 224.

ibn al-Kūfī. ابن الكوفي

to have influenced most of the ascetics of Baghdād at this time. He was well known in Baghdād for his patched garments (*muraqq'a*). It is said that before he died he made a will in which he bequeathed his robe to one of his friends. This friend found that the arm of the robe weighed 13 ratl . . . so many patches were attached to it.¹ Many other anecdotes are related concerning this robe.²

Ibn al-Karanbī was a pupil of Abū 'Abd Allah al-Burāthī³ and an intimate teacher of al-Junayd,⁴ who has recounted many sayings and stories of him. Once Junayd asked Ibn al-Karanbī: "What is your opinion of a man who talks knowledge, but does not practise it?" and the reply was: "If that man is you . . . continue!"⁵

One day al-Junayd offered Ibn al-Karanbī a purse of money, but it was refused. Al-Junayd said: "If you are not in need and yet will take it, you will please a Muslim's heart." So the purse was accepted.⁶

It is related, too, by al-Junayd, that, when al-Karanbī was dying, al-Junayd was sitting by his head gazing upwards at the sky. Ibn Karanbī said: "It is distant" and thereupon Junayd turned his eyes to the ground. Again he heard Ibn al-Karanbī say: "It is distant." Sarraj explains this conversation by pointing out that God is so near to us, there is no need to look either at the sky or at the ground in order to be aware of Him.⁷

When the ṣūfīs of Baghdād were persecuted, Ibn al-Karanbī left the town. As he walked away in his old patched gown, with his long flowing beard, he made a funny face and shook his head to and fro, so that people said he was mad.⁸

It seems from these stories that Ibn al-Karanbī's personality and manner were eccentric in the extreme, but that he was simple, sincere and friendly. His life in humble seclusion must have stood out as a model before the eyes of his friends and pupils.

Tārikh Baghdād, v. 14, p. 414. *Talbīs Iblīs*, p. 191.

Ibid.

Abū 'Abd Alla b. Ali Ja'far al-Burathī, see v. 10, p. 224, of *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*.

See *Luma'*, pp. 146, 210, 188. *Qūt al-Qulūb*, v. 3, p. 109. *Ihyā'*, v. 4, p. 347.

Luma', p. 182. *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, p. 224.

Luma', p. 198. *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, p. 224.

Tārikh Baghdād, v. 14, p. 414. *Luma'*, p. 210.

Ibid.

He reached a high stage as a *ṣūfī* by his religious exercises, by conquering his desires, and by a true purification of his soul. Al-Junayd probably was influenced by Ibn Karanbī, not so much with regard to theory, but by his living *ṣūfism*, his manner and his way of life.

Al-Qanṭarī

Another of his associates in Baghdād was Shaykh Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muslim 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qanṭarī. Al-Qanṭarī associated with Ma'rūf al-Karkhī and Bishr ibn al-Hārith al-Hafī¹ and was renowned in Baghdad for his piety and ascetic life.

Al-Junayd frequently visited al-Qanṭarī's house and many were the discussions which took place. On presenting himself one day at noon, he was asked by al-Qanṭarī: "Have you no work to do that you come to me at this hour?" to which Junayd replied: "If my visits to you are not work . . . then what is work?"²

Qanṭarī was of a retiring and reserved disposition. He was rather poor and earned a meagre livelihood by copying, for little reward, the collection of traditions compiled by Sufyān al-Thawrī. He died in 260 A.H.³

As already stated, Junayd met most of the 'Irāqī Shaykhs of his time, amongst whom were Abū Ya'qūb al-Zayyāt, Muḥammad al-Samīn and Ḥasan al-Bazzāz. To their opinions in discussion he listened attentively and he has himself related many of their views as authoritative.

Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Ḥaddād

Al-Junayd also met in Baghdād Shaykhs who were not 'Irāqī, but who had come to the metropolis as visiting travellers. Amongst these distinguished visitors was one Abū Ḥaṣṣ 'Amr ibn Salama al-Ḥaddād al-Nishāpūrī, the Shaykh of Khorāsān, who was a Mu'tazilite and had written several books on scholastic theology. In referring to one of these books, *Kitāb al-Jārūf fī Takāfu' al-Adilla*, Ibn al-Nadīm stated that it was refuted by

Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'i, al-Khayyāt and al-Hārith al-Warrāq.¹ Al-Khayyāt, in his book, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*, has referred to Abū Ḥaṣṣ as a "Rāfiḍī" and stated that he had adopted the theory of *Qidam al-Ithnayn*² (the eternity of the attribute and the essence), a belief not held by the mu'tazilites.

In addition to this lesser difference in the metaphysical sphere, we learn that Abū Ḥaṣṣ, whilst being a mu'tazilite, was also a *ṣūfī*. There were, in fact, numerous mu'tazilites, such as Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥoṣarī aṣ-Ṣūfī and Abū Mūsā 'Īsa ibn al-Haytham aṣ-Ṣūfī, whose full names tell us that they were *ṣūfis*. Their fellow mu'tazilites are stated to have said of them that originally they were mu'tazilites but were later corrupted. It seems that Abū Ḥaṣṣ was one of their number.³

Abū Ḥaṣṣ's teachers were 'Abdullah ibn Mahdī al-Abīwardī and 'Alī an-Naṣrabādhi, and he also had associated with Aḥmad ibn Khudrūya.⁴

Al-Junayd held Abū Ḥaṣṣ in high esteem and said of him: "He was one of those who understood the meaning of divine reality . . . one had but to meet him to feel satisfied and enriched . . . he spoke from the depth of his heart and was a perfect scholar . . . the Shaykhs of Khorāsān are on a very high level and likewise are their followers."⁵

When Abū Ḥaṣṣ went to Baghdād he lived as a guest in the house of Junayd, who relates the following story of the visit: "Abū Ḥaṣṣ remained in my home for a year with eight of his friends. Every day I offered them fresh food, new clothes and perfumes. On his leaving I presented him and his friends with new attire and, on taking his farewell, Abū Ḥaṣṣ said to me: "When you visit Nishāpūr we shall treat you with all nobility and generosity. What you have done for us was a self-imposed task. If the poor come to you, do not worry: for when you are hungry, they will be hungry; when you are fed, they also will be fed, and their coming and going will not harass you."⁶

¹ *Fihrist* (Chester Beatty MS.), 118a.

² *Intiṣār*, pp. 97, 105.

³ *Fihrist*. Op. cit.

⁴ *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 12, p. 220.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁶ *Ḥikmat al-Ḥakīm*, p. 158a.

¹ *Hilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, pp. 305, 309.

² *Ibid.*, *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 3, p. 256.

³ *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 3, p. 256.

It has been said that Abū Ḥaḥṣ did not converse well in Arabic, his mother tongue being Persian. However, when he met the Shaykhs of Baghdād, including Junayd, in the Shuniziyya Mosque, he conversed with them in elegant Arabic, so that they despaired of rivalling him in eloquence. They asked him: "What is generosity?" He said: "Let one of you begin and declare what it is." Junayd said: "In my opinion generosity consists in not regarding your generosity and in not referring to it yourself." Abū Ḥaḥṣ replied: "How well the Shaykh has spoken, but in my opinion generosity consists in doing justice and in not demanding justice." Junayd said to his disciples: "Rise, for Abū Ḥaḥṣ has surpassed Adam and all his descendants (in generosity)."¹

It is said that Abū Ḥaḥṣ was rich, as his silken raiment was costly and magnificent and his house was beautifully furnished.² This suggests rather an aesthetic mysticism, not based on the ascetic life, but rather on a gentle and noble attitude to life. In this Abū Ḥaḥṣ differed from the ascetic behaviour and attitude of most members of the Baghdādi School of Ṣūfīs. This level of the Khorasan in the spiritual and material sphere impressed al-Junayd greatly.

It is not unlikely that al-Junayd had learned how to appreciate aesthetic values from the wealthy and sensitive al-Muhāsibī and that this lesson was re-learned while Abū Ḥaḥṣ and his companions resided with him for a year. Here were Muslims, scholars, abreast of the times in all the issues which preoccupied the learned world, who knew how to savour beauty and comfort which were ephemeral, but who, none the less, achieved a level of spirituality, a state of Tawḥīd, which inspired his respect and his admiration. Asceticism was clearly not the exclusive path to spiritual elevation and it was pointless to make an issue of abnegation. All the anecdotes about him tend to confirm the view that Abū Ḥaḥṣ liked luxury and accepted physical comforts without their, in any way, interfering with his mystical meditations. It may well be that al-Junayd either accepted anew or became confirmed in his view that what mattered for him primarily was the ṣūfī conception and the ṣūfī experience and

¹ *Hujwiri*, p. 124.

² *Luma'*, p. 188.

that the high level of ṣūfism in Khorasān impressed him profoundly. It may well be that Abū Ḥaḥṣ acted as the significant motive which caused al-Junayd to cast off the ascetic side of ṣūfism, which appeared to him to be secondary, and to embrace wholeheartedly the concentrated devotion on spiritual experience and development to which his writings so amply testify.

Abū Ḥaḥṣ died about 260 A.H.¹

Yahya ibn Mu'adh and Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī

Another distinguished visitor to Baghdād whom al-Junayd met was Abū Ja'far Yahya ibn Mu'adh ibn Ja'far ar-Rāzī (died 258 A.H.). It is related that, when Yahya visited Baghdād, the pious used to gather around him to converse with him and at one of these sessions, when Junayd rose to speak, Yahya said to him: "Keep silent, O sheep! Who are you to speak when men speak?"² It is probable that al-Junayd was still a comparatively young man at this date, since there remain fragments of a correspondence of great importance between Yahya and al-Junayd. If these fragments are genuine, as they appear to be, then they would most probably be of a later date than Yahya's visit to Baghdād.³

Yahya was famous for his teachings on Ma'rifa (gnosticism) and was in contact with the famous ṣūfī Ṭayfūr ibn 'Isa ibn Sharwasān Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (died 261 A.H.). Junayd did not meet Abū Yazīd nor was there correspondence between them, but Junayd knew of him through his books and also through many friends whom they had in common, particularly Yahya Ibn Mu'adh. Al-Junayd has, in fact, written a commentary on the sayings of Abū Yazīd, parts of which are still preserved.⁴ The sayings of Abū Yazīd are difficult to understand, because they are couched in recondite and obscure language. Al-Junayd's commentary on Abū Yazīd's mystic speculations is generally not favourable; he sees them as jejune catchwords of little merit. Though in his intellectual judgment al-Junayd has to disparage what Abū Yazīd wrote, this did not

¹ *Qushayri*, p. 17.

² *Ṣikḥ Baghdād*, v. 14, p. 209. Ibn Khallikān, v. 2, p. 296.

³ The later "Rasā'il."

⁴ *al-Luma'*, pp. 380-387.

prevent him from recognizing Abū Yazīd's spirituality and appreciating his status as a ṣūfī. He said of him: "He is amongst us like Gabriel amongst the angels."¹ None the less, the following extracts are evidence of his critical attitude. He says, for instance, in his commentary: "Abū Yazīd has described certain aspects of his knowledge of Unification, which reveal a somewhat primitive method of approach suitable only for beginners." And further: "That his descriptions are only half complete."²

Abū Yazīd's popularity in the ṣūfī world did not wane after his death. Such sayings of his as "There is nothing in this garment of mine except God" are quoted to this day by those that tread the ṣūfī path. But Abū Yazīd did not formulate a doctrine or work out a mystical theological system. He has been described by orientalists as a pantheist, and, if we take this to mean that he recognized his intuition in religious matters to be godly and that this intuition revealed the sentient world to him as being the unity of God, then we are compelled to point out that he and al-Junayd were far apart in their mystical approach. For Bistāmī in his elevated state the ephemeral world took on divinity, whereas for al-Junayd in his elevated state the ephemeral world did not exist. Al-Junayd achieved mystical union with a Godhead that was timeless, untrammelled by earthly conceptions, unshackled by intellectual considerations, Himself so beyond human description that contact with Him was ineffable.

Yūsuf b. al-Ḥusayn

Another distinguished ṣūfī who visited Baghdād at this period, and who carried on a correspondence with al-Junayd, was Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ar-Rāzī, who was then the Shaykh of Rayy and Jibal (died 304 A.H.). He was a skilled stylist and wrote with unusual clarity. One of his letters has most fortunately been preserved in the body of the manuscript of al-Junayd's *rasā'il*.³ From the literary point of view, it is the finest specimen of contemporary ṣūfī literature which has come down to us. Its intrinsic merit as a piece of

Arabic prose was recognized immediately and it was passed round and esteemed in the circle of al-Junayd's acquaintance. Even to-day, as we read it, we are reminded of the standard of prose style achieved by such men as 'Abd-ul-Ḥamīd and Ibn ul-Muqaffa'. But Yūsuf, though of Persian origin, did not indulge in flowery expression. His merit, the fineness of his style (*ḥusnu Kālamihī*), springs from the clarity of his perception and the integrity of his understanding. He does not allow the words to inspire the thought or befog the issue, but has clearly worked out his problem intellectually and expressed his meaning with elegance and tact. Yūsuf was clearly an outstanding intelligence and gifted with unusual perception in ṣūfī matters. He was as welcome with Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, the great legal mind, as he was with Dhū'n Nūn al-Miṣrī, to whom so much was revealed in mystical experience. That such a man should rate al-Junayd so high and call him the *sayyid al-ḥukamā' wal-'arīfīn min ahli-'asrihi* (the leader of the learned and mystics of this our age) is not the idle flattery of the sycophant. It is the recognition by a contemporary of deep perception of the genius and spirituality of al-Junayd.¹

Abū al-Ḥusayn appears to have been a great traveller. He visited many countries, including 'Irāq, where he met and became friends with the famous 'Irāqī ṣūfī Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz and probably also al-Junayd; Syria, where he met and heard the distinguished Syrian ṣūfī Aḥmad ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī; and Egypt, where he associated with Dhū'n Nūn al-Miṣrī.² Dhū'n Nūn (died 245 A.H.) was Abū al-Ḥusayn's principal guide in ṣūfism. Yūsuf used to quote Dhū'n Nūn constantly and was largely instrumental in spreading his ideas in Khorasān. Dhū'n Nūn visited Baghdād for a short time,³ but we cannot discover whether or not he met al-Junayd. In passing, it should be noted that there are very few quotations or references to Dhū'n Nūn in al-Junayd's sayings and writings.

Junayd's Travels

Junayd rarely travelled, but remained mostly in Baghdād,

¹ Hujwiri, p. 106.

² *Kitāb al-Luma'*, Op. cit.

³ See p. 84.

Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', v. 10, p. 240.

Tārīkh Baghdād, v. 14, p. 314. Abī Ya'la, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, p. 279.

Ibn Khallikān, v. 1, p. 126.

... and make the pilgrimage once.¹ It appears from Qushayrī that al-Junayd made the pilgrimage in his early youth.² Baghdād, however, was the centre of travel and trade and the centre of spiritual life, so that he had the opportunity of meeting many distinguished people in his home town.

Conclusion

This survey shows that the contacts and relations of al-Junayd with the famous ṣūfīs and religious thinkers who were his contemporaries, both in 'Irāq and in distant lands, were both wide and numerous.

His vast and many-sided learning and his clarity of thinking enabled him to absorb this variety of thought and teachings of his period, and to transform them through the medium of his personality, and, by adding his own ideas and experiences, to reach his own mystical way and his own philosophical system. He preserved all that was sound in the thoughts of the individual ṣūfīs, putting them in a certain order. We may say, as Hartmann remarks,³ he "Islamized Mysticism and integrated the thoughts of the ṣūfīs, many of which at first may have appeared strange in the framework of Islām. He cut short the intellectual and moral extravagances without relinquishing the essence." He joined, so to speak, the many wild mountain streams of ṣūfism into a firm and constant river-bed. He, in fact, has joined and united Mysticism with Orthodoxy. He is thus rightly called the "Shaykh al-Ṭarīqa," the "Master of the Way."⁴ Through him, we may say, ṣūfism reached its fulfilment.

For this, Junayd has been accepted and praised by all authorities in Islām, Mystics and conservative Orthodox alike. They have called him the "scholarly ṣūfī," the "chief of the community," "the peacock among the divines." Even traditionalists like Ibn Taymiya and Ibn al-Qayyim, who were very anti-ṣūfī, accepted his authority and appreciated his *tarīqa*, and spoke highly of him.⁵

¹ Sarrāj, *Luma'*, p. 207, but Ibn Khallikān reported that he made the pilgrimage 30 times, which is doubtful.

² Qushayrī, p. 147.

³ *Der Islam*, v. 6, p. 69.

⁴ Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, fol. 32.

⁵ Ibn Taymiya, *Minhāj*, v. 3, p. 85. Ibn Qayyim

CHAPTER III

THE MYSTICAL SCHOOL OF BAGHDĀD

The early founders of the Mystical School of Baghdād were Saqāṭī and Muḥāsibī. Saqāṭī was of Persian origin, while Muḥāsibī was an Arab; both, however, were Sunnites, that is, they followed the orthodox tradition of Islām. Saqāṭī represented, we might almost say, the advanced wing in his daring research into the Unity of God (*Tawḥīd*), while Muḥāsibī represented the conservative wing in his conscious moderation and in his concern with the practical moral issues.

The Esoteric Character of the School

The main topic for the School of Baghdād was certainly *Tawḥīd*. They were called by their contemporaries *Arbāb at-Tawḥīd*, the "People of Tawḥīd."¹ They pursued the knowledge of Tawḥīd to dangerous heights. They developed their doctrine, worked out their system and taught it in secret. It was in keeping with this secrecy that they used to formulate their teachings and ideas in a special esoteric terminology (*Ishārāt*), invented for this purpose.

It is reported that al-Junayd restricted the number of people with whom he spoke on ṣūfism to no more than twenty.² No doubt he felt that his teaching was of a very secret nature and might be a source of danger if publicly known, because it was liable to be misunderstood. When he wrote to a friend, he would word his letter very cautiously. In one such letter he says: "What prevented me from communicating with you was the thought that my letter might fall into the hands of someone without your knowledge. Some time ago I wrote a letter to a friend in Isfahān; someone opened it and I did not understand for it was written in a secret language."

them in a manner which they understand. May God keep you safe and in peace! . . . You must control your tongue and know your contemporaries. Talk to the people so that they can understand and omit that which they cannot understand."¹

Sarrāj, in the *Kitāb al-Luma'* records several stories which describe the efforts of the ṣūfīs of this period to keep their teachings secret. He tells us, for instance, the following story: "Amr ibn 'Uthmān al-Makkī had notes which contained special and private knowledge, but these fell into the hands of one of his students, who ran away with them. When 'Amr al-Makkī heard this, he said: 'I am afraid his hands, feet and head will be cut off.' It was said that the young man who stole the letters was al-Husayn al-Hallāj, and he was killed later on account of this, and thus the prophecy which 'Amr al-Makkī had uttered was fulfilled."²

Certain ṣūfīs have gone so far as to say that Hallāj was killed because he revealed the secret teachings of the ṣūfīs to the laity. 'Aṭṭār says: "One of the great ṣūfīs stated that, on the day on which Hallāj was crucified, he spent the whole night under the cross praying. When day broke, the ṣūfī heard a voice saying: 'We have revealed to him a secret of the kings.'"³ 'Aṭṭār also relates that Shiblī said: "During this night I remained praying and at dawn I went to sleep. In my sleep I saw the day of Resurrection and heard the voice of God saying: 'This was because he has divulged our secret to others.'"⁴

From these stories we can see how the ṣūfīs of Baghdād at this period advisedly tried to conceal their teachings from the public at large. They knew that the laity were not capable of understanding them.

The ṣūfīs held that ultimate religious truths contained an element of mystery and that none should reveal this element of mystery to the uninitiated. They held that the revealing of the secret of the nature of Divinity was heresy. Some of them taught that if the secret of the nature of Divinity were revealed that prophecy would cease. Further, they taught that prophecy

¹ Risālat al-Junayd to Abī Bakr al-Kisā'i, *Luma'*, p. 239.

² Sarrāj, pages from *Kitāb al-Luma'*, p. 9.

³ 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, v. 2, p. 26.

⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

had a secret which, if revealed, would cause knowledge to cease and that, if the secret of knowledge were revealed, natural law would cease.¹ So we see that the ṣūfīs were fully aware of the nature of their esoteric knowledge and that it could not be communicated to the orthodox because of its superficially heretical appearance.

Characteristic of the atmosphere in which these thinkers lived is Junayd's feeling that the knowledge of the Divine was so vast and high that his circle and he himself possessed only a small fragment of it, and even of this they could share out and explain only a little. He hints that there may have been a decline in such knowledge from the previous generation even to his time. He says: "The carpet of the knowledge of which we are now talking has been wrapped up for twenty years. We are talking at present merely on its fringe." He also said: "I have discussed with people for years knowledge which I did not understand and of which I was ignorant. I have not opposed myself to this, though I have by no means always accepted and loved it without knowing." He said further: "In the olden days we used to gather together to talk with one another about many-sided knowledge. Nowadays, nobody cares for it or asks me about it."²

Thus we see that Junayd, in his old age, felt that ṣūfism had flourished more and that people were more sincere and more seriously inclined to ṣūfism in the far-off days of his youth, and that more knowledge had been revealed to those men with whom he had lived when he was young. He was, we gather, somewhat disappointed during the period of his old age, when he had many sad experiences and felt isolated.

Persecutions of the School

Towards the end of Junayd's life, the School of Baghdād suffered much. The ṣūfīs were accused of being atheists, infidels and believers in re-incarnation. Every member of the school, including al-Junayd, was publicly accused of heresy. Sarrāj has stated that, although al-Junayd had a profound knowledge of many things, was honoured and recognized as an outstanding

¹ Ghazzālī, *Op. cit.*, p. 199. Makkī, *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

² Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, v. 2, p. 41.

religious man and an equally great man in intellectual stature, and although he continued his religious worship, in spite of all this, the people bore witness against him as being an infidel.¹

Many historians have related the story of the persecution of the Šūfī School of Baghdād. Ghulām al-Khalīl raised the case against the šūfīs before the Khalīf al-Muwaffaq. Junayd described himself as being simply a Jurist by profession and thus escaped the court.² The others were taken before the court. The accusation was that these men discussed the Love of God, while Ghulām al-Khalīl held that no love between God and man was possible, and that it was therefore heretical to use that expression about God. He held that love was an attribute only of the creature and not of the Creator, and that nobody was allowed to say: "I love God and God loves me."³

The šūfī school, al-Junayd, Nūrī, Abū Sa'īd and others, on the other hand, held that there was love between God and man. Qushayrī interpreted love (*Maḥabba*) towards God as follows: "*Maḥabba* is a condition which man feels in his heart, too subtle to be expressed in words. This subtle spiritual state leads the worshipper to recognize the greatness of God, instills in him the desire, above all things, to please God, makes him unable to tolerate God's absence, induces in him constant excitement at the thought of God; he finds no rest without God and feels an intimate comfort in continual thought of Him. Yet the idea of the love of man for God does not imply physical attraction and possession. How could it do so—since the true Infinite is too holy to be fully attained or reached or comprehended. It is more to the point to describe the man who knows *maḥabba* as being completely lost and overwhelmed in the beloved, than to refer to the relationship as one of possession. If the lover were described as submerged in the beloved, it would be more adequate than if they were described as being together."⁴ But this love between God and man seemed, at the time, not to be an orthodox doctrine. The teaching that "I

¹ Sarrāj, page from *Luma'*, p. 9.

² Qushayrī, p. 112. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbis Iblis*, p. 172.

³ Sarrāj, page from *Kitāb al-Luma'*, p. 5. See Ghazālī, *Ihya*, v. 4, p. 330.

⁴ Qushayrī, p. 144.

love God and God loves me" may have scandalized many a traditional mind.¹

This was the main thesis of the accusation. Sarrāj quotes other accusations, for instance, that the šūfīs were said to be promoting superstition and pantheistic views. A case was opened against Nūrī, Abū Hamza, Raqqām, Shahhām and Sumnūn. Sarrāj says that: "Sumnūn, a friend of Junayd, was called 'the lover.' He was handsome and talked with charm. It is related that a woman disciple of Sumnūn's fell in love with him. When he knew that she loved him, he turned her out of his circle. This woman then went to al-Junayd and asked him: 'What do you think of a man who was my way to God, but then God vanished and the man remained?' Junayd knew what she meant and did not answer her. The woman had wished to marry Sumnūn, but, when he turned her out in a haughty way, she went to Ghulām al-Khalīl, his adversary, saying: 'These men,' mentioning some names, 'did not behave correctly towards me.' So Ghulām al-Khalīl took up this and other complaints and brought the case before the Khalīfa."²

The main point in the accusation seems to have been the terms "Love" and "Passion," which can be interpreted in various ways. It seems that the accusation against the Šūfī School of Baghdād confused theological objections to their teachings with objections to their behaviour.

It appears that the Qāḍī (High Judge) of Baghdād handed over the case to the Khalīfa in his capacity as supreme judge. The Khalīfa Muwaffaq decided to acquit the šūfīs, probably finding that there was not sufficient evidence against them. Most probably his decision was motivated by reason of state and governmental interest and not as much, as some šūfī authors declared, by a special sympathy on the part of the monarch towards the teachings of the šūfī school. All we know of this ruler is that he showed himself to be a matter-of-fact statesman and a soldier.

Yet, though they were acquitted and did not undergo any

¹ See further about "*Maḥabba*, Shawq, 'ishq" Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, p. 4, p. 286, ff. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij*, v. 3, p. 4, ff.

² Sarrāj, page of *Luma'*, p. 8.

physical harm, this persecution, supported by a part of public opinion, was most unfortunate for the Šūfī School of Baghdād, and its members withdrew more and more from public life and became increasing silent and cautious.¹

These events must have left their imprint on the soul of al-Junayd and cast a shadow over his later life. It was for him an experience leading to withdrawal.

It was probably at that time, under the influence of this trial and its wider social context, that al-Junayd began to base his teachings, more and more, on the Qu'rān, the Ḥadith and the Sunna. He probably felt that, for the good of the people, it was wiser to restrain the unbridled outbursts of individual šūfī thinkers. He led those "wild turbulent mountain streams" of religious enthusiasm into the benevolent channels clearly indicated for the good of the wise as well as the simple, by the tradition of Islām, so that they should not endanger the general orders of things.

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL

Friends of Junayd—an-Nūrī

The Baghdād School of Šūfism at this time had many distinguished members who were either friends or pupils of al-Junayd.

Among his friends and companions we think of Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad an-Nūrī. Nūrī's family originated from Khorāsān, but he was born and brought up in Baghdād. He was, like Junayd himself, a pupil of Saqatī, and in matters relating to the mystical way, he and Junayd were in agreement.² They were intimate friends and Junayd deeply appreciated Nūrī. The name "Nūrī" was given to him because, when he spoke in a dark room, the whole room would appear illuminated by the light of his spirituality and by the light of truth. Nūrī knew by intuition the innermost thoughts of his disciples, so that Junayd said of him: "Abū al-Ḥusayn knoweth the minds of man."³ Nūrī also stressed the importance of self-

¹ See more details in Sarrāj, op. cit. *Qūt al-Qulūb*, v. 3, p. 114. Hujwiri, p. 62. *Iḥyā'*, v. 4, p. 330. Ibn al-Jawzi, op. cit., pp. 169, 172, 371.

² Hujwiri, p. 189.

³ Ibid., p. 104.

sacrifice and self-abnegation, which was most difficult for a man of learning to practise, but which was an essential condition for the state of a šūfī. He was by no means as cautious as Junayd, and eventually was prosecuted by the authorities, and had to face the hostility of the people. He died soon after his acquittal in 295 A.H. It is related that Junayd said: "Since the death of Nūrī, no one has spoken about the essential Truth."¹ When Junayd was dying he requested that he should be buried at the side of Nūrī, but this wish was not carried out.²

Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz

Another friend of Junayd's was Abū Sa'īd Aḥmad ibn 'Isa al-Kharrāz, who was considered one of the most distinguished šūfīs of Baghdād at that period. He, too, was a pupil of Saqatī and was one of the earliest mystics to write books.³ It is said he was the first to explain the doctrine of *fanā'* and *baqā'*. He practised self-mortification and Junayd is reported to have said: "If God asked us to do what Kharrāz is doing, we would soon perish, for we could not do it." Someone asked: "What is Kharrāz doing?" and Junayd replied: "He remains at his weaving loom year after year, but never does he forget to mention God between each two woofs."⁴ Kharrāz died in 277 A.H.

Ibn 'Atā' al-'Ādamī

Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sahl ibn 'Atā' al-'Ādamī was another friend of Junayd. They were most intimate and met on the same spiritual level. Eventually, however, a difference of opinion occurred between them and they separated and became opponents. The dispute arose regarding the rich and the poor.⁵ Ibn 'Atā' maintained the superiority of those rich people who thanked God for His gifts. He argued that at the Resurrection they would be called to account for the use they had made of their wealth, and that giving such an account entails the hearing of the Divine Word—

¹ Qushayrī, p. 20.

² *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 5, p. 130.

³ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, p. 246.

⁴ *Nujūm*, v. 3, p. 76.

⁵ *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 3, p. 28.

without any medium between them—in the form of a reproach, and a reproach is always addressed by the beloved to the lover. Junayd, on the other hand, considered the poor superior, and he answered: "If He will call the rich to account, He will ask the poor for their apology . . . and to be asked for an apology is better than to be called to account."¹ This question appears to have been a bone of contention, both in private and in public, between the two friends, and was ultimately the cause of their separation.² Ibn 'Atā' died in 309 A.H.

Ruwaym

Another intimate friend of al-Junayd was Abū Muḥammad Ruwaym ibn Aḥmad, who was a great scholar and well versed in the reading and interpretation of the Qu'rān. He wrote several works on ṣūfism, which are often quoted, although they have not been preserved. It appears that in later years Junayd also separated from Ruwaym because, towards the end of his life, Ruwaym ranged himself on the side of the rich, gained the Khalif's confidence and became *Qādī* at the Court of Baghdād.⁴ Junayd was then heard to remark: "We are devotees accidentally occupied with the world, and Ruwaym is a man occupied with the world who is devoted to God." Ruwaym died in 303 A.H.

The following is a brief account of a few other distinguished friends of Junayd, who contributed to the fame of the School of Baghdād:

Abū Ḥamza Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Baghdādī, who belonged to the circle of Saqatī and was one of the leading ṣūfīs of Baghdād. He is said to have been the first of the ṣūfīs to speak in public.³ He died in 269 A.H.

Abū 'Abdullah 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān al-Makkī, who was a patrician of Baghdād and from whom Junayd also separated on the occasion of Makkī accepting the post of a *Qādī*.⁴ Makkī was the first teacher of Ḥallaj before Junayd. He died in 297 A.H.

Abu'l Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Isma'il Zohayr al-Nassāj, who

was a great Shaykh and also a pupil of Saqatī. Junayd held Nassāj in high esteem and is reported to have said of him: "He is the best of us."¹ Both Shibli and Khawwās were converted to mysticism in Nassāj's circle. He sent Shibli to Junayd, wishing to express his respect for the latter. Nassāj lived to a very ripe old age and probably survived Junayd by many years.

Abū Aḥmad Muṣ'ab al-Qalānisī, who, as a mystic, held as high a position in Baghdād as al-Junayd. One of Qalānisī's pupils was Abū Sa'īd al-'Arabī. Qalānisī died in 270 A.H.²

Abū'l Ḥasan Sumnūn ibn Ḥamza was an associate of Saqatī, Qaṣṣāb and Qalānisī. Sumnūn left some very fine poems and spoke of love with such beautifully tender words that he was called "the lover." He was an intimate friend of Junayd and died shortly before him, in the same year—298 A.H.³

Abū'l 'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūq, from Tūs, but lived in Baghdād. He belonged to the circle of Muḥāsibī and of Saqatī. He died in 298 A.H.⁴

Abū Ja'far al-Ḥaddād al-Kabīr, another well-known member of the school.⁵

These then were the leading members of the School of Baghdād, contemporaries of al-Junayd, who were to be found gathered around Saqatī, Muḥāsibī and the other great Shaykhs of this older generation.

JUNAYD'S PUPILS

The next generation were pupils both of al-Junayd and of his contemporaries whom we have mentioned previously.

Jurayrī

Of these pupils we should mention Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Jurayrī. He was a scholar in every branch of learning, especially in Law, and was also well versed in Theology. His status in ṣūfism was very high and he was a pupil of both Saqatī and Junayd. Al-Junayd had the

¹ Hujwiri, p. 23.

² See *Qūt al-Qulūb*, v. 2, p. 191, and *Luma'*, p. 220.

³ *Muntazam*, v. 3, p. 68. Ṣafādī, *al-Wāfi*, p. 344.

⁴ Shadharāt, v. 2, p. 225.

¹ Hujwiri, p. 144. Qushayrī, p. 25.

² See *Muntazam*, v. 5, p. 79. Qushayrī, p. 133. *Luma'*, p. 217.

³ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, p. 309. *Tārīkh Baghdād*, v. 9, p. 234.

⁴ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, p. 213. *Tārīkh Baghdād*, v. 5, p. 100.

⁵ *Tārīkh Baghdād*, v. 14, p. 412.

highest regard for al-Jurayrī, so much so that he is reported as having said to him: "Teach my pupils, discipline and train them."¹ Indeed, when Junayd was dying, he was asked by those around him: "Who will succeed you?" He replied: "Abū Muḥammad al-Jurayrī."² After Junayd's death, Jurayrī therefore took his place as a teacher of Junayd's circle of pupils. Al-Jurayrī died in 311 A.H. By an unfortunate mischance, when a pilgrim, he was crushed to death in the stampede on the Mecca high road during the battle of Obeir.³

Shibli

Another remarkable pupil of Junayd was Abū Bakr Dulaf ibn Jahdar al-Shibli. He was at first a chamberlain to the Khalif, but later was converted to ṣūfism at a gathering at the house of Nassāj. He relinquished his official post and became a disciple of Junayd. Apparently al-Shibli was rather hot-headed and over-enthusiastic and Junayd, although he liked him greatly, is reported as having said: "Shibli is always drunk . . . if he became sober, he would be an *Imām* from whom people would benefit."⁴ It is related that one day, when Shibli entered the bazaar, the people said: "He is mad." To which Shibli replied: "You think I am mad, and I think you are sane. May God increase my madness and your sense."⁵ There is another anecdote which is characteristic of Shibli. One day, filled with rapturous ecstasy, he approached Junayd. On observing that Junayd was sad, he enquired as to the cause of the trouble, and Junayd said: "He who seeks shall find." Shibli at once replied: "No, he who finds shall seek!"⁶ Shibli was noted for his subtleness in the use of symbolic allusions (*ishārāt*), and in his many short aphorisms, of which there are frequent examples in the classical collections of *shath*. He was also conspicuous for his deliberate eccentricities and his queer ascetic practices. In the story of al-Ḥallāj the role attributed to Shibli is very important. He seems to have continued venerating al-Ḥallāj

¹ Hujwiri, p. 148.

² *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 4, p. 432.

³ Ibid., p. 433.

⁴ *Luma'*, p. 404.

⁵ Hujwiri, p. 415.

⁶ Hujwiri, p. 414.

in secret, after having denied him in public. Dogmatically, he had the same attitude as Junayd, but in his way of speech and behaviour he differed from him in the extreme.

In the classical *Silsila* he forms a link in the chain between his teacher Junayd and his pupil Naṣrābādī. Shibli was a Baghdādī, born and brought up in the metropolis. He died in 334 A.H. and his tomb is still visited in the A'zamīya quarter of Baghdād.¹

Ḥallāj

One of the most famous pupils of al-Junayd was Abū'l Muḥith al-Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj. He was brought up in Tustar and was a pupil of Sahl al-Tustarī, but later he came to Baghdād and joined 'Amr al-Makkī. It is said that Ḥallāj, in a temper, broke his friendship with 'Amr al-Makkī and went to Junayd. Junayd asked him for what purpose he had come, to which Ḥallāj replied: "For the purpose of associating with the Shaykh." Junayd replied: "I do not associate with madmen. Association demands sanity; if that is wanting, the result is such behaviour as yours towards Sahl b. 'Abdallah Tustarī and 'Amr." Ḥusayn said: "Oh, Shaykh, sobriety and intoxication are two attributes of man, and man is hidden from his Lord until his attributes are annihilated." "O son of Maṣṣūr," said Junayd, "you are in error concerning sobriety and intoxication. The former denotes soundness of one's spiritual state in relation to God, while the latter denotes excess of longing and extremity of love; neither of them can be fulfilled by human effort. Oh son of Maṣṣūr, in your words I see much folly and nonsense."²

'Amr al-Makkī said of Ḥallāj: "If I could meet him, I would kill him with my own hand." When asked the reason for his anger, he replied: "I was reading a verse from the Qur'ān and Ḥallāj said: 'I, too, can speak like that.'"³ Ḥallāj's teachings were very similar to those of Junayd and the Ṣūfī School of Baghdād. He presented Junayd's doctrine of Unification, *Tamhīd*, however, with such an excess of realism that it shocked many muslims. The doctrine which he put

¹ Cf. *Luma'*, pp. 395-406. *Talbīs Iblīs*, pp. 358-361.

² Hujwiri, p. 189.

³ *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 8, p. 121.

forth in his Kitāb *aṭ-Ṭawāsīn*, he summed up in the formula: "Ana'l Haqq" ("I am God"), so it is not astonishing that, when Ḥallāj was arrested and prosecuted on the charge of heresy, many Shaykhs disavowed him.

Al-Khaṭīb gives us a very important quotation expressing the relation of Ḥallāj to the Baghdād School. The following words were written in a letter of Ḥallāj to one of his friends: "From the most gracious, most merciful (Al-Raḥmān, Al-Raḥīm) (which are the Qur'ānic attributes of God) to so and so." When this letter was placed before him, he said: "Yes, that is my handwriting and I have written this." He was questioned: "You have been proclaiming your prophetic power and now you proclaim your divinity?" To which Ḥallāj replied: "I am not proclaiming my divinity, but it is what we mystics call the complete Unification with the Divine Will ('ayn al-jam'). God is the Writer and I am only an instrument." When asked: "Are there others who hold these principles?" he said, "Yes—Ibn 'Aṭā, Abū Muḥammad al-Jurayrī and Abū Bakr al-Shiblī. Jurayrī and Shiblī keep their thoughts concealed, but not so Ibn 'Aṭā." Jurayrī and Shiblī as witnesses were questioned, but they both denied Ḥallāj. Ibn 'Aṭā, however, declared his agreement with Ḥallāj's doctrine and in consequence was executed.¹

Nicholson sums up the case of Ḥallāj in the following words: "Ḥallāj was so deeply in earnest, that it was impossible for him to compromise with his conscience. Against the public authority of the Muslim Church and State he sets up the personal authority immediately derived from God with whom the saint is one. And he was no theorist like Junayd; he was suspected of dealings with the Carmathians, he had preached his faith to believers and infidels alike, and, above all, sought to win converts by working 'evidentiary' miracles. On these grounds he was justly condemned. His crime was not that, as later ṣūfīs put it, 'he divulged the mystery of the Divine Lordship,' but that in obedience to an inward call he proclaimed and actively asserted a truth which involves religious, political and social anarchy."² Ḥallāj was condemned to death and executed in

Baghdād in 309 A.H. The research on the profound and historically significant teachings of Ḥallāj has become possible through recovery of documents and exhaustive studies of the scattered Ḥallājian fragments by Professor Massignon, of the University of Paris.¹

Other well-known pupils of Junayd were Ja'far al-Khuldi and Abū Sa'id al-A'rābī, whom we have already mentioned; Abū 'Alī Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Rūdhābārī al-Baghdādī, who died in Egypt in 322 A.H.; Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Kittānī al-Baghdādī, who died in Mecca in 322 A.H.; Abū'l Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Muzayyin, who died in 328 A.H.; Abu Muḥammad 'Abdullah ibn Muḥammad al-Murta'ish, who died in 328 A.H.; Abū Ya'qūb Ishāq ibn Muḥammad an-Nahrajūrī, who died in 330 A.H. We name these pupils of al-Junayd, but he had many others from Baghdād and a considerable number who came to him from distant places.

Baghdād at that time was the spiritual and cultural capital of the Islamic World, and in this setting the Ṣūfī School of Baghdād flourished and was truly representative as such. Its influence spread far and wide, to the western countries such as Syria, Egypt, Arabia and Africa, and to the east as far as Khurāsān. This school held in itself all the preceding and contemporary mystic thoughts belonging to and within the reach of the Moslem World.²

Makkī says: "When our Shaykh Abu Sa'id ibn al-A'rābī wrote his book *Ṭabaqāt al-Nussāk*, he described the first man who taught this knowledge and the others who came after him, men of Basra, Syrians and Khurāsānīs, and said that the last to come was the Baghdād School." He also said "that the last person to teach ṣūfism was al-Junayd; he had vision and truth and expression, and we hesitate to mention anyone after him."³

The circle of the Ṣūfī School of Baghdād was at the time very much in the centre of spiritual life in general, and as a central point of this spiritual circle of friends and students we find the personality of al-Junayd.

¹ See Massignon, *Kitāb at Tawāsīn*.

² Mecca, as the chief place of pilgrimage, has always played an important role in spreading Ṣūfī teaching in the outlying countries of the Islamic World.

³ *Qūt al-Qulūb*, v. 2, p. 41.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERSONALITY OF AL-JUNAYD

We may assume from the various sources which we have examined that al-Junayd was a gifted and thoughtful boy. His brilliant talents showed themselves at an early age and were soon discovered by his uncle Saqaṭī, himself, as we have seen, a distinguished mystic and theological thinker and also an eminent educationist. Saqaṭī bestowed infinite care on the boy, developing and disciplining his talents, and restraining him from wasting himself before admiring audiences, as infant prodigies are apt to do.

Saqaṭī also ordered the lad not to mix with the people, but he himself developed Junayd's youthful mind by conversing and putting questions to him in a "Socratic" manner, and he allowed him to listen to the conversations of the distinguished Shaykhs who used to gather at his home. Under the influence of his uncle, Junayd, therefore, led a retired and reserved life at home in his early years, thus discovering for himself the mystical path—the path of the ṣūfī. He was rather a shy youth.

On attaining the age of a student, when he was about twelve, Junayd studied mainly law at the feet of Abū Thawr, and very soon it was obvious that the young man had the makings of a remarkable jurist, as he gave striking answers to complicated legal questions which occurred in the circle of Abu Thawr, his friends and students.

He seems to have shown and retained an originality of thought, a quick wit and a discerning intelligence, and a splendidly clear diction throughout his life as, for instance, is shown in the anecdote between himself and Ibn al-Karanbī.

In his attitude towards life, he appears to have fallen neither into the extreme of aesthetic luxury nor of hardy asceticism, both of which were prevalent amongst the ṣūfīs of his time.

Junayd was a silk merchant by trade and is stated to have

had considerable means, which he used moderately and judiciously for his own living, and which he utilized in the main in entertaining his numerous friends. His house in Baghdād seems to have been a centre for the ṣūfīs of the town and for those from other countries passing through the capital, a meeting place where they gathered and remained as guests. His money was also used to help many poor ṣūfīs who followed the ascetic way of life.

He was regarded by his colleagues as an excellent friend, understanding and loyal, and many of his friendships continued throughout his life, as is confirmed by these many stories and by his exchange of letters. No information exists to show whether or not Junayd had a wife and children. No sons of his are mentioned anywhere and, if he had a family of his own, they cannot have played a central role in his life.

In an age when travelling of ṣūfīs was a common feature, al-Junayd cannot have travelled much, as the only journey which has been recorded is his pilgrimage to Mecca. It would seem that Junayd was not in favour of making numerous pilgrimages to Mecca; he rather felt that pilgrimages to Mecca should be on a spiritual plane, and his attitude is illustrated by the following story:

"A certain man came to Junayd. Junayd asked him whence he came. He replied: 'I have been on the pilgrimage.' Junayd said: 'From the time when you first journeyed from your home have you also journeyed away from all sins?' He said: 'No.' 'Then,' said Junayd, 'you have made no journey. At every stage where you halted for the night did you traverse a station on the way to God?' He said: 'No.' 'Then,' said Junayd, 'you have not trodden the road stage by stage. When you put on the pilgrim's garb at the proper place did you discard the attributes of humanity as you cast off your ordinary clothes?' 'No.' 'Then you have not put on the pilgrim's garb. When you stood on 'Arafāt did you stand one instant in contemplation of God?' 'No.' 'Then you have not stood on 'Arafāt. When you went to Muzdalifa and achieved your desire did you renounce all sensual desires?' 'No.' 'Then you have not gone to Muzdalifa. When you circumambulated the Temple did you behold the beauty of God in the abode of purification?'

'No.' 'Then you have not circumambulated the Temple. When you ran between Ṣafā and Marwa did you attain to the rank of purity (ṣafā') and virtue (murūwat)?' 'No.' 'Then you have not run. When you came to Mina did all your wishes (munyatha) cease?' 'No.' 'Then you have not yet visited Mina. When you reached the slaughter-place and offered sacrifices did you sacrifice the objects of sensual desire?' 'No.' 'Then you have not sacrificed. When you threw the stones did you throw away whatever sensual thoughts were accompanying you?' 'No.' 'Then you have not yet thrown the stones and you have not yet performed the pilgrimage. Return and perform the pilgrimage in the manner which I have described in order that you may arrive at the station of Abraham.'"¹

Obviously Junayd preferred to remain in Baghdād, which from year to year attracted travellers from distant lands and from all parts of the Moslem world, and which was a pre-eminent centre of commerce as well as of spiritual communication.

He had a loyal female servant named Zaitūna, who served him and two other Shaykhs, Nūrī and Abū Ḥamza.² A slave girl was once given him as a gift for a wife, but this girl he, in turn, presented to one of his companions.³ Junayd was always industrious, was extremely modest in eating and drinking, and led a very regular life of prayer. As, however, he was physically stout and vigorous, some people are said to have doubted the genuineness of his ṣūfī asceticism.⁴

He disliked being involved in politics and, in order to allay the suspicions of the authorities, he did not teach in public. Neither did he mix with the Carmathians and others. At the time of the ṣūfī trials, he referred to himself as "nothing but a jurist" and remained in the background. He also held himself aloof from Ḥallāj and turned him away.

As a consequence of continual trials and prosecutions, the popularity of the ṣūfīs in the public life of Baghdād waned and Junayd, in his declining years, experienced a phase of dis-

¹ Hujwiri, p. 328.

² *Tārikh Baghdād*, v. 5, p. 134. Qushayrī, p. 171.

³ *Rawḍat an-Nādhir*, p. 10, quoted from Mez Renaissance, p. 288.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12, quoted by Mez, op. cit., p. 290.

appointment and resignation and seems to have withdrawn himself more and more from public life.

He was most considerate and cautious regarding what should and should not be taught to the multitude. It is said that, when his pupil Shiblī wrote him a daring mystical letter, Junayd returned the offending letter to the sender and on it wrote: "Oh, Abū Bakr, be careful with the people. Always we devise some means of camouflaging our words, splitting them and discussing them between ourselves, yet here you come along and tear away the veil!"¹

Junayd was sceptical with regard to the profession of a judge. Many religious people of the time took the ḥadīth literally: "Two judges in hell and one in paradise." Two of his friends, Ruwaym and 'Amr al-Makki, who were jurists, accepted posts as Qādis with the government. Al-Junayd strongly criticized them and separated from them on this account.

The following is another anecdote which demonstrates the cautious and diplomatic attitude adopted by Junayd, who, knowing the capacity and nature of the people, restrained himself from telling them more than they could fully grasp. His friend Nūrī is reported as saying: "I went to Junayd and found him seated in the professorial chair. I said to him: 'Oh, Abū'l Qāsim, thou hast concealed the truth from them and they have put you in the place of honour. I have told them the truth and they have pelted me with stones.'"²

On reading Junayd's letters to his friends, we find that he continually warns them to be cautious in their writings and to talk to the people carefully and with restraint.

Junayd was a non-radical and was considered in his attitude to orthodox theology. He held that ṣūfī teachings were based on the fundamentals of the tradition of Islām, and worked continuously to prove this. In this spirit he raised, as we have seen, ṣūfism to the level of orthodoxy, and thus made it acceptable to the orthodox representatives of Islām. As an educationist with a deep knowledge of the nature of human

¹ *Luma'*, pp. 233-4.

² Hujwiri, p. 131.

beings and of human society, he was afraid to break with the orthodox accepted tradition of Islām. He always led a full and regular devotional life. It is said that he prayed many *rak'at* every day, recited the Qur'ān and fasted. He continued this devotional life of prayer and mortification even in his old age when he was very weak, right up to the day of his death.¹

Junayd was an accomplished scholar—endowed with a subtle intellect of a wide scope. He was familiar with the various branches of learning of his time. He spoke with authority on jurisprudence, theology and *ethics*, yet, in spite of his learning, he was inwardly of a retiring and reticent disposition, and lived in a state of mystical awareness and self-concentration.

It is reported that, when someone asked Junayd about a certain mystical state of the mind, he would retire to his home, where he would concentrate in devotion, and later he would emerge and give the questioner an account of what had been his experience.²

Khuldī, a pupil of Junayd, is reported to have said: "We know no other Shaykh who has combined knowledge and experience but al-Junayd. Most Shaykhs have great knowledge but no experience, while others have experience but very little knowledge. Junayd, however, has deep experience and a very great and profound knowledge. On considering his knowledge, it could likewise be said it surpasses his experience."

We find in al-Junayd that deep feeling and profound intuition which is characteristic of many Persian classicists. Although of Persian descent, he at the same time possessed that discipline of thought and clarity of Islamic doctrine characteristic of a thinker of the Arabic school and training. He thus unites in himself, as many other remarkable personalities do, the virtue of a double heritage.

It may be assumed from what we have learned of Junayd that he was a harmonious personality. He was a teacher in the full sense of the word, and he was a true friend. We imagine that he was a man serene, unpretentious and of good cheer, radiating something of his inner life towards those who surrounded him.

¹ *Luma'*, p. 210. Hujwiri, p. 303.

² *Tārikh Baghdad*, v. 7.

CHAPTER V

THE WRITINGS OF AL-JUNAYD

JUNAYD'S MODE OF EXPRESSION

Junayd was not as prolific an author as was his teacher al-Muḥāsibī. Indeed his works are relatively small in number and actually only very few of them are in our possession. Ibn an Nadīm has attributed to him the following works:

Kitāb Amthāl al-Qur'ān.

*Kitāb Rasā'il.*¹

Sarrāj, in his *Kitāb al-Luma'*, has mentioned some passage from al-Junayd's work "*Sharḥ Shaṭḥiyāt Abī Yaẓīd al-Bisṭāmī*," and also refers to a book called "al-Munājāt" by Junayd.²

Hujwiri, in the *Kashf ul-Mahjūb*, has spoken of another book by al-Junayd called "*Taṣḥīḥ al-Īrāda*."³ Actually what has survived on Junayd's works is only his *Rasā'il*, which is preserved in Istanbul in the Sehit Ali MS. Nr. 1374, and his *Risāla Dawā' at Tafrīt* and a few other *Rasā'il* in *Hilyat al-Awliyā'*. This can be explained by the fact that Junayd rarely used the medium of paper when teaching his pupils; instead he preferred to teach them by word of mouth, through his lectures and through his many conversations with those around him. These unwritten teachings have come down to us in considerable volume. They are preserved in many classical ṣūfī books, and one cannot raise any question of ṣūfī teaching without meeting Junayd's personal opinion quoted *in extenso* in the literature we still possess. This can be readily accounted for by considering Junayd's penetrating, perspicacious and original style of diction in teaching and in answering questions. It seems that Junayd did not intend that his writings should reach a wide public. Khaṭīb

¹ *Fihrist*, p. 264.

² *Luma'*, pp. 209, 280.

³ Hujwiri, p. 338.

relates that, when Junayd was dying, he requested that all his books should be buried with him.¹

Characteristic of the colour and manner of al-Junayd's mystical expression are the following quotations:

"Once, when I was reciting my daily lection, I fell asleep and, when I was between sleeping and waking, I saw an angel descending from heaven. He cast his spirit into my heart and then prompted me, saying: 'Stand, Abu'l-Qāsim, and speak. The spirit is in you!' and I fell to weeping."²

Someone asked Junayd regarding the speech of the ṣūfīs and he answered: "The ṣūfīs have no speech." Ibn Khafīf was questioned on this and his reply was: "What Abu'l-Qāsim has said is true . . . a ṣūfī is concerned with nothing but the invisible world . . . when his tongue is loosened and God allows him to speak, he will speak, otherwise he will remain silent. Eloquence is the prerogative of those who study the sources and learn them by heart."³

It is reported that al-Junayd, when asked to repeat what he had already said, replied that he could not. "God put those words into my mouth and made my tongue overflow, they are not from books or from learning, but only from the favour of God."⁴

On another occasion, on being asked to dictate what he had spoken, he replied: "If it came from my tongue I could dictate it to you."⁵

Thus we see that Junayd in his speech, as we should expect of a ṣūfī, was inspired. He did not express his ṣūfī convictions as a man of letters would, nor as a scholar would expand on a subject, but it is obvious that he opened his heart and poured forth what was in the innermost depths of his soul.

But these "unwritten teachings" preserved by the hearers and found in the classical literature are by no means the most profound, original or fundamental of his teachings. The most

original and fundamental of his thoughts al-Junayd entrusted to his writings, which were not intended to get into the hands of the public at large, and this explains why, whilst his sayings were so widely quoted, his writings were scarcely known to the generations after him.

It seems that even al-Ghazālī himself only read Junayd's teachings in quotation, and in his autobiography he refers to them as "scattered sayings" attributed to Junayd, Shiblī and Bistami (al-Aqwālu'l-Manthūra, 'an-al-Junayd wa'l-Shiblī, wa abī Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī,¹ which means that these writings of al-Junayd were not in the hands of the people in general, or even of all the learned ṣūfīs. Had they been circulated amongst the public, they might easily have been misjudged and misunderstood. Sarraj, in the *Luma'*, has explained this matter, and mentioned several instances where the people accused the ṣūfī Shaykhs of being atheists, unbelievers and given to heterodoxy, owing to their hearing sayings which they were unable to understand.²

The Style of al-Junayd

Junayd in his speaking and writing was inspired and the nature of his utterances was such that they were shaped by unconscious insight. Moreover, his writings within the frame of ṣūfī literature have their own very special characteristics.

(a) His ideas concerning what he wished to say were always very clear and concentrated in his own mind. He placed and retained them in the forefront of his thoughts; thus they were before him from the beginning to the end, and never did he lose the thread of his subject. When he expounds a point, it is an experience which he is describing, and he himself was in the actual "state" of it. He does not talk about it "as of a theory," but rather as of something which has happened to him and which he has undergone. While speaking, he is full of his experience. It is said that, when asked something, he would not answer immediately, but would retire to be alone to experience the particular state; then he would emerge and give the answer.³

¹ *Tarikh Baghdād*, v. 7, p. 248.

² See *Rasā'il*, fol. 51a.

³ See *Rasā'il*, fol. 66a.

⁴ See p. 5, footnote 7.

⁵ See p. 7, footnote 1.

¹ Al-Munqidh, p. 123.

² See *Luma'*, p. 14.

³ *Tarikh Baghdād*, v. 7, p. 246. Cf. *Luma'*, p. 152.

In accordance with the custom of the Moslem scholars, Junayd always began with a foreword, praising God and the Prophet, and in this introduction he would immediately put forward his ideas wholly and concisely, and later unfold them in detail. On reaching the conclusion, he always linked this in a subtle and lucid way with his leading idea—UNIFICATION.¹ Such was his method.

(b) Thus we may say that Junayd's style of writing was systematic.

In his works we meet for the first time in Islamic literature writings in the highest mystical sphere and, at the same time, with a mature, adequate method, in a systematic order. This style and method was entirely his own. He has in this no fore-runner and teacher. Also, after him we find scarcely anyone who could be considered his equal and who could write on the highest mystical questions in an inspired condition and yet in a systematic manner as he does. In his writings can be traced his use of logic and reasoning. They have the shape of treatises which are addressed as letters to his friends.

In the process of his reasoning he sometimes comes to a point when he finds it is impossible for the intellect to grasp the idea and to go any further, as it is something beyond reason. We give here some examples:

Junayd said in one of his letters:

"How can this be described, or the intellect perceive it, unless it be that God grants His control to the perception and His care to its secrets. Where are you when God has taken you entirely to Himself and has received before Him that of you which He desires? When He has granted you the indulgence of His communion and favoured you with the ability to answer Him? In this state you are spoken to and you speak; you are asked about yourself and you ask questions. The words communicated are as unique pearls, testimony upon testimony, a cloud of witnesses multiplying continually, harbingers of divine grace. They are as heavy rain from every side, generous donors to you of glory from God the glorious. Were it not for God's gift of grace and

¹ See as example—"Kitāb al-Farq bain al-Ikblāṣ was aṣ-Ṣidq."

His vouchsafing His Holy Spirit, then would man's mind be completely stupified before Him and his perception, in the presence of God, utterly shattered."¹

Junayd also wrote in another letter:

"Here then is the perception of those that understand, shackled, and the learning of the learned, halted. This is the objective of the wisdom of the wise. (This is as far as words can take us.) What has been described is of the highest elevation and is as far as we can go since man's description of God is limited subjectively."²

(c) Junayd's style is full of intimations. The reason is that the idea proves inexpressible and incapable of being transmitted by mere words. As Junayd said in one of his letters:

"The foregoing is but an indication of what cannot be further explained. Moreover, this of its very nature, cannot be understood from indication, but only when you yourself are in the state which is described. I have wrapped up what is in it, but have not elaborated. Accept it then from its only source; if God wills, He will guide you to its comprehension."³

Another reason for his using these intimations and this veiled way of expressing himself is that it would be dangerous to attempt to express the meaning more explicitly, as the reader might be incapable of understanding and of grasping it in full, and so might be led astray. Thus Junayd said in another of his letters:

"One must be kind and careful of what one says to these people, and must talk to them in a matter they can understand."⁴

(d) For the reason mentioned al-Junayd's style is often enigmatic. As we have seen, he likes to hint at what he has to say. It seems that this style was the usual way of corresponding amongst the ṣūfīs of this time. They would use such a difficult and esoteric style in the exchange inside their circle. We quote the answer of al-Junayd to such a mystical letter he received from a friend of his:

¹ See Rasā'il, No. 1, p. 2.

² See Rasā'il, No. 3, p. 8.

³ See Rasā'il, No. 6, p. 52.

⁴ Luma', p. 241.

"In what precedes, I have only indicated what can be described at great length, but in this essay there is no place for a full description. Oh, my brother—may God be pleased with you—I have received your letter which I was delighted both to read and interpret. I rejoiced in it from the beginning to the end. I was happy to discover the esoteric knowledge, fine wisdom, indications both clear and illuminating. That which you indicated was not concealed from me and I saw clearly that which was clearly described. All this reached my comprehension since I know in advance the object which you sought. It is clear to me whither the thought leads, the object of its train as well as its origin, where the thought begins and where it ends and what happens to him in whom God inspires this train of thought."¹

It was extraordinarily fortunate that the great ṣūfī mystics of this time were not isolated individuals, as mystics often are, but that they were a group of friends who each somehow shared the religious experience of the other. They were able to exchange those religious experiences with one another in their letters in an adequate esoteric language.

(e) In these letters there appears the Islamic mystical terminology used genuinely in the right place, a language which certainly has its own unconscious artistic quality. In this exchange of letters between friends it developed and reached its maturity.

Thus, the Mystical School of Baghdād, and first of all Junayd, amongst his equal established the mystical terminology. This was a heritage enriching the language, ready as a medium for the later generations of Islamic mystical, theological and philosophical thinkers.

It would be a very valuable work to compare the terminology in the letters of al-Junayd with the terms of the mystics after him. Thus we might see how the mystical language terminology developed.

(f) We can also trace in the writings of al-Junayd the influence of his legal training. He would put his thought in the form of a question asking for an opinion, and thus arguing,

¹ Rasā'il, No. 3, p. 9.

would add the answer in the manner of a legal adviser, as we see in his eight questions on Unification. Even the title of this essay, *Mas'ala* (question), is a legal expression.

He sometimes uses a dialectic method, putting one part of his thought into the mouth of a scholar, and the other part into the mouth of a wise man, and developing a dialogue between the two. We can see this in his treatise on *Fanā'* and in his letter to Yayhā ibn Mu'adh.

(g) Finally, if we cannot count Junayd's works amongst Arabic Belles Lettres, his style is indeed very forceful, genuine, expressive and warm. It is passionate, enlightened and full of grace. It springs from the very heart and touches the heart. This is what we might call the eloquence of Junayd's style.

JUNAYD'S WRITINGS

Extant Works

The writings which have been preserved are, first of all, the "Rasā'il Junayd" in Ṣehit 'Alī MS. No. 1374. It contains the following of his writings:

- (1) *Risāla ila ba'd ikhwānihi* (fol. 3s/3b).
- (2) *Risāla ila Yahya b. Mu'adh ar-Rāzī* (3b).
This *Risāla* is not that one which as Sarrāj quotes is in the *Luma'* as stated in Brockl., Sup. I, 355.
- (3) *Risāla ila ba'd ikhwānihi*.
This *Risāla* quoted in *Luma'*. (See introductions (*Ṣudūr*) by Junayd, p. 242.)
- (4) *Risāla ila abī Bakr al-Kisā'i ad-Dīnāwarī* (4a).
In our manuscript we have only the end of this *Risāla*. Sarrāj has quoted it completely, pp. 239-241. Between folios 4a and 33a in the manuscript is *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣidq* of Kharrāz.
- (5) *Risāla* of al-Junayd without title (33a-34a).
Brockelmann has not given this *Risāla*.
- (6) *Risāla ila 'Amr b. 'Uthmān al-Makkī* (34a-42b).
This *Risāla* is not complete. In folio 43a a part of another *Risāla* has nothing to do with al-Makkī, as he

calls the receiver Abū 'Abd Allāh, which is not the Kunya of al-Makkī.

- (7) *Risāla ila Yūsuf b. al-Ḥusayn ar-Rāzī* (43a-44b).

This *Risāla* is also not complete. In folio 45a we find chapters about *Sukr* and *Ifāqā*, which are different in script and not by Junayd, as we shall see. In folio 51a we find sayings and poetry of Junayd. In 51b sayings not by Junayd.

- (8) *Dawā'al-arwāḥ* (52a-54a).

The same in Kairo I, VII, 109, 27, 298. (See Brockleemann, Sup. I, 554.) Professor Arberry has published it with translation. (JRAS, 1937, 219-231.) This *Risāla* is also quoted in *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, pp. 103-107. Junayd has attributed it to al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī. That seems impossible for the style is Junayd's style and not that of al-Muḥāsibī; maybe Junayd has used what Muḥāsibī said in a discussion with him, putting it down in his own words.

- (9) *Kitāb al-Fanā'* (54b-57b).

- (10) *Kitāb al-Mithāq* (58a-59b).

- (11) *Kitāb fi'l-Ulūhiyya* (59b-60b).

- (12) *Kitāb fi'l-Farq bain al-Ikhlāṣ waṣ-ṣidq*.

- (13) *Bāb ākhar fi'l-Tawḥīd* (63a-63b).

- (14) *Mas'ala Ukhra* (in *Tawḥīd*) (63b-63a).

- (15) *Mas'ala Ukhra* (in *Tawḥīd*) (64a).

This one is quoted by Quahayrī.

- (16) *Mas'ala Ukhra* (in *Tawḥīd*) (64a-64b).

- (17) *Mas'ala Ukhra* (in *Tawḥīd*) (64a).

- (18) *Mas'ala Ukhra* (in *Tawḥīd*) (64b-65a).

- (19) *Mas'ala Ukhra* (in *Tawḥīd*) (65a-65b).

- (20) *Ākhir Mas'ala* (in *Tawḥīd*) (65b-66a).

- (21) *Adab al-Muftaqir ila 'llāh* (66b-60b).

From his writings which also have been preserved:

- (22) *Kitāb Dawā' at-Tafrīt*.

Mingana Arabic (Islamic) (Selly Oak Library). No. 905, folios 109-119, Birmingham.

The majority of this *Risāla* is quoted in *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v. 10, p. 262, line 9, p. 271, line 10.

From the letters of Junayd, we possess also the following quoted by Abu Nu'aym:

- (23) *Risāla ila ba'd ikhwānihi*.

Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', v. 10, pp. 260-261.

- (24) *Kitāb al-Junayd to Abū'l 'Abbās ad-Dīnawārī*.

Ibid., p. 263.

- (25) *Kitāb al-Junayd to Abū Ishāq al-Māristānī*.

Ibid., p. 276.

- (26) *Risāla ila ba'd ikhwānihi*.

Ibid., p. 279.

- (27) *Risāla ila ba'd ikhwānihi*.

As-Sarrāj, in the *Luma'*, quotes also considerable passages of Junayd's introduction to his letters (see *Luma'*, p. 241, ff.) and the following writings:

- (28) Part of a letter from Junayd to Yaḥya ibn Mu'adh.

Luma', p. 356.

- (29) *Sharh Shaṭṭiyāt Abī Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī*.

Luma', pp. 380-385.

The writings mentioned above are, without doubt, Junayd's. They are written in the same style which we know as Junayd's, and there is no difference in manner or matter, so that we have to accept them as his.

There is another work of Junayd mentioned in Brockleemann, Sup. I, which we have not had an opportunity to examine.

- (30) *Qaṣīda Ṣūfiya*.

Berl. 7542.

Lost Works

There are also works of Junayd named and quoted by various authors which appear to be lost.

- (1) *Amthāl al-Qur'ān*.

Ibn an-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 264.

- (2) *Taṣḥīh al-Irāda*.

Hujwīrī, *Kashf al Maḥjūb*, p. 338.

- (3) *Kitāb al-Munājāt*.

Sarrāj, *Luma'*, p. 259.

- (4) Muntakhab al-asrār fī ṣifat as Ṣiddiqīn wa 'l-Abrār.
Ibn 'Arabī, Mawaqī', p. 30, 16.

Brockelmann has mentioned two more, but these actually cannot be from the works of Junayd:

- (1) Hikāyāt.
Sakhawī, A'lām, 41, 16.
This book seems to be a work of al-Khuldi (see Introduction).
- (2) Al-Mutafarriqāt al-Ma'thūra'an al-Junayd wa 'sh-shibli wa Abī Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī.
Ghazālī, Munqidh, p. 123.
This also is not a work of Junayd; it is merely the scattered sayings of the Shaykhs in the various ṣūfī books.

Works Wrongly Attributed to al-Junayd

- (1) Risāla of Abū'l Qāsim al-Junayd to Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn, attributed to Junayd by Brockelmann, Sup. I, p. 354.
Arberry, JRAS, July 1935, pp. 499-507.

This Risāla is given as the first one in our Istanbul manuscript, Shit Ali 1374, as the answer (Jawāb) of Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn to the following Risāla of Junayd (folios 43a-44b), mentioned above as No. 7.

The word answer (Jawāb) is not very distinctly written in the manuscript. Moreover, we have some passages from this Risāla quoted as a work of Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn in the Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', vol. 10, pp. 240-241, and the Risāla of Qushayrī, p. 22. At any rate, the style of this Risāla is very refined and elaborate and altogether different from the style of Junayd. Further, the author of this Risāla has named some of his teachers and these Shaykhs, Dhū'n-Nūn and Abū'l Ḥawārī, are not the teachers of Junayd, but of Yūsuf.

- (2) Risāla Fi'l-Sukr and Risāla Fi'l-fāqah (folio).

These two letters are attributed to Junayd by Massignon and Brockelmann, while Professor Arberry says: "They are in reality the product of a later pen, as is proved by the fact that in folio 496 there are references to Junayd himself among other ṣūfīs." See JRAS, 1935, p. 499.

- (3) Kitāb al-Qaṣd ila 'llah, MS. Lucknow and Asaf, I, p. 390.

Attributed to Junayd by Ḥajjī Khalifa, Vol. II, p. 1806, see Brockelmann, Sup. I, p. 355. Nicholson has studied this work and has come to the conclusion that it cannot possibly have been written by Junayd, since a passage in it is dated later, 395 A.H. See Islamica II, 401-15.

- (4) Ma'ālī al-Himam, in the same MS.

Also attributed to Junayd by Ḥajjī Khalifa (ibidem). Nicholson in Islamica (ibidem) does not give this attribution verification. Arberry in *Islamic Culture*, 1937, p. 95, says: "This attribution to al-Junayd is, of course, completely false, as is evidenced by the fact that not only are persons quoted in this tract who lived long after the death of al-Junayd, but also Junayd himself is mentioned in a passage." This is according to Arberry, the book of Abū'l-Qāsim al-'Arif.

- (5) As-Sirr fī Anfās as-Sufiyya, Cairo, I, II, 87, 2, I, p. 316 (anon.).

Also attributed to Junayd (see Brockelmann, Sup. I, p. 354). A. J. Arberry, in *Journal of the Bombay Branch, JRAS, MS.*, vol. 15 (1937), p. 1, has examined this work and found it to be certainly not by Junayd.

PART II

THE DOCTRINE OF AL-JUNAYD

INTRODUCTION

The starting point of the religious feeling of the ṣūfī is the sense of the tremendous distance between man and God. This fundamental feeling prevails throughout the consciousness of the ṣūfī. Sometimes it seems as if this fundamental consciousness were a distinct dualism and, even if it is not dualism, there always remains the feeling of the gulf between the powerless human being and the omnipotent God.

The ṣūfīs are always aware of this, and the positive supplement of this feeling is their longing to bridge the gap by striving to transcend the gulf.

If we ask what is the means whereby the ṣūfīs can overcome the distance realized by them between man and God, we will first of all receive the answer: It is *Taṣawwuf* (Mysticism). They may differ in their definitions of *Taṣawwuf*, in ways of life, in expressions, in the emphasis they may put on this or that, and thus they may vary and come to different conclusions. But the fundamental feeling and the aim are the same.

If we now endeavour to trace and follow up al-Junayd's teaching, we ought first of all to give his definition of *Taṣawwuf*, which will open to us the door to what is in his mind and which will allow us to see his ultimate aim.

Many of his definitions of *Taṣawwuf* have come down to us,¹ such as the following two:

"*Taṣawwuf* is to be with God without attachment to ought else."²

"*Taṣawwuf* is an attempt wherein man abides." Al-Junayd was asked: "Is it an attribute of God or of man?"

¹ See Nicholson, "The Origin and Development of Sūfism," JRAS (1906), p. 331, ff. Cf. Subki, *Tabaqat*, v. 3, p. 239.

² Qushayri, p. 127.

and his reply was: "In essence it is an attribute of God, but by image it is an attribute of man."¹

The first definition means that to bridge the gulf is to detach oneself from everything else and to be with God.

The second definition means: in the state where the gulf is bridged, the *ṣūfī* realizes that his own attributes are in reality attributes of God, and so his own attributes vanish. He realizes that all attributes of man are only attributes in image—in a secondary and derived sense—but that they are in reality attributes of God. Or, in other words, as Hujwīrī explains this definition of al-Junayd: "In real Unification (*Tawḥīd*) there are, correctly speaking, no human attributes at all, because human attributes are not constant but are only in image and imprint (*rasm*), having no permanence, for God is the agent. Therefore, they are really the attributes of God."²

This state of the *ṣūfī* which Junayd means is described by him in one of his letters as follows:

"In this state of absolute purity he has lost his personal attributes; by this loss he is wholly present (in God). By being wholly present in God, he is wholly lost to himself. And thus he is present before God while absent in himself; absent and present at the same time. He is where he is now, and he is not where he is."³

To define it in one word—the state described in this letter is *Tawḥīd*. The Muwaḥḥid, the man who has reached Unification, could not fully realize that God is One, except by losing himself in the Oneness of God.

Thus we meet here the Doctrine of *Tawḥīd*, Divine Unification, which is the centre of al-Junayd's experience and teachings. This experience of his carried him probably far beyond the frame given by traditional religion. Facing the fundamental Moslem dogma, which by the will of God places the believer in the midst of the community, he was well aware of the very danger of this state experienced and taught by him.

His experience, as we find, carried him to a further state which he describes in a second doctrine. He continues in the same letter:

¹ Hujwīrī, p. 36.

² Ibid.

³ Risāla, No. 10.

"Then, after he has not been, he is where he had been (sc. before creation). He is himself, after he has not been really himself. He is present in himself and in God, after having been present in God and absent in himself. This is because he has left the intoxication of God's overwhelming, *Ghalaba*, and come to the clarity of sobriety, *Ṣaḥw*, and contemplation is once more restored to him, so that he can put everything in its right place and assess it correctly."¹

Thus we meet al-Junayd's essential doctrine of Sobriety, which the majority of *ṣūfīs* at this time accepted. The Qur'ān and Sunna were proclaimed to be the standard to which not only speculation, but also spiritual feelings and states must conform.² Al-Junayd's moral personality was able to save him from the dangers into which some of his successors fell.³

These two doctrines—the "Doctrine of Divine Unity," *Tawḥīd*, and the "Doctrine of Sobriety," *Ṣaḥw*—are the two main pillars which support the structure of al-Junayd's mysticism, of which we shall now try to give a fuller survey and interpretation.

¹ Risāla, No. 10.

² See Nicholson, *ibid.*, p. 328. Cf. Qushayrī, Introduction of ar-Risāla.

³ Cf. Qushayrī, p. 137.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIFICATION

During al-Junayd's lifetime, in the third century A.H., the Doctrine of the Unity of God was particularly discussed by all religious groups, especially by the Mu'tazila, who had great authority at this time. They were, in fact, called the "People of *Tawhīd*"—they treated this question and approached the Oneness of God through the means of reason, and arrived at conclusions of a complex nature.

The ṣūfīs, on the other hand, being dissatisfied with reason and its results, strove to experience the Unity of God by way of feeling and revelation. Thus Ibn al-Kātib, a ṣūfī of the fourth century, says: "The Mu'tazila have practised the *tanẓīh*, the remotio of God from attributing to Him any imperfect qualities, by reason (*'aql*), and have gone with this the wrong way. The ṣūfīs have practised it through *'ilm*, revealed knowledge, and have hit the right way."¹ Ibn al-Kātib compared in this way the method of the ṣūfīs with the method of the Mu'tazila and shed light on their respective views on the Unity of God. So we see that the ṣūfīs, amongst whom al-Junayd stands out as a central figure, were in complete harmony with the spirit of the age in dealing with the same essential problem, as the others.

The ṣūfīs maintain that the Unity of God is indefinable. Al-Junayd says: "The noblest saying referring to *Tawhīd* is the word of Abū Bakr: 'Praise be to God, Who has vouchsafed to His creatures no other means of obtaining Knowledge of Him except through their impotence to attain Knowledge of Him.'"² This certainly shows that, according to al-Junayd, *Tawhīd* is far beyond the sphere of any intellectual cognition. The same is probably the meaning of these words of al-Junayd: "*Tawhīd* is a reality in which the traces disappear and the signs

fade away, and God is as He always was."¹ More clearly he expresses the same thing in other words: "If the understanding of understanding has ended in the *Tawhīd*, it ends in fixity."² On an occasion when he attempted to speak of the *Tawhīd*, he merely expressed it by several descriptions illustrating certain characteristics of it, because, as he stated when he was asked for an explanation: "It is an idea (*mā'na*) the definition of which cannot be defined, despite the vast and complete knowledge contained therein."³ In fact, all ṣūfīs are aware of this and realize their own incapacity to put *Tawhīd* into words and explain it in speaking, and the impossibility of fathoming it by reason.⁴

If we seek now to explore the essence of *Tawhīd* according to the ṣūfīs more closely, we find the result is somewhat meagre. We first give the summing-up of al-Qushayrī:

"*Tawhīd* has a threefold meaning:

- (1) '*Tawhīd* of God as subject with regard to God as object in His knowledge that He is unique and His assertion of Himself that He is One.'
- (2) '*Tawhīd* of God as subject with regard to man as object in His assertion that man is a confessor of Unity and His creating the power of confession of Unity in man.'
- (3) '*Tawhīd* of the created being as subject with regard to God as object, is the knowledge of man that God is unique and his judgment and assertion about Him that He is unique.'"⁵

If this were the whole *Tawhīd* of the ṣūfīs, one would not really know much about the distinctive ṣūfī element in it. Dhu'n Nūn al-Miṣrī defines *Tawhīd* as follows: "*Tawhīd* is that you know that God's omnipotence in the calling into being of anything does not result necessarily from a natural power,

¹ Qushayrī, p. 135.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ This resembles closely the descriptions of *Tawhīd* given by the later writers, e.g. Ibn Khaldūn, who says: "The trouble is only caused by the weakness in our language which does not lend itself to the expression of abstract realities, and by the deficiency of the words for rendering the truth in and by them."

Muqaddima, v. 3, p. 76 (edition Quatremere).

⁵ Qushayrī, p. 135.

¹ Qushayrī, p. 27.

² Hujwiri, p. 284; similar saying in *Luma'*, p. 124.

and that His creation goes on without instrument; that the cause of all things is His creation which has no cause and that everything of which you, yourself, may form a conception is a thing, so that God is different from it."¹ This signifies purely dogmatic confession of Unity with an anti-Mu'tazilite colouring.

Both these definitions are clear and truthful, but they lack the particular ṣūfī approach.

Only al-Junayd seems to have had a capacity for a more intimate approach to the conception of *Tawḥīd* in its specific significance for the ṣūfī.

He has expressed the "Unification" (*Tawḥīd*) in his famous phrase: "Unification is the separation of that which has from that which was originated in Time." "*Ifrād al-Qadīm 'an al-muḥdath.*"

That means:

- (1) To separate the *Eternal Essence* from the originated essence, i.e. to fix or hold fast to this Essence of God and to disprove or reject all others.
- (2) To separate the *Attributes* contained therein from all other attributes, i.e. to fix or hold fast to the Attributes of God and to disprove or refute all others.
- (3) To separate *Actions*, i.e. to separate the actions of God and to disprove and refute all others.

All of these, His Attributes and His Actions, are so completely absorbed in His Essence that he who is in the state to comprehend this Unification sees that the Essence, Attributes and Actions are all completely absorbed in the Essence of God. He comes to this as he himself in this state is absorbed in God.

The early and the later ṣūfī writers were extremely impressed and attracted by this phrase of al-Junayd, and considered it the most brief and comprehensive of all the ṣūfī sayings on Unification; each ṣūfī has interpreted it in the light of his own particular approach.

For instance, Sarrāj, after having mentioned the definition of Unification according to the sense which the Moslems

generally attach to it, and according to the sense which the ṣūfīs attach to it, commented on a saying of Shibli to the effect that: "The Unity of God is utterly inexpressible and indefinable," and quoted the brief sentence of al-Junayd as a justification of this statement.¹

Al-Hujwiri commenced with this sentence of al-Junayd when he considered the indications which the Shaykhs had given on this subject, and has interpreted it in this manner: "You must not regard the eternal as a place of phenomena, or phenomena as a place of the eternal; and you must know that God is eternal and that you are phenomena, and that nothing of your genus is connected with Him, and that nothing of His Attributes is mingled in you, and that there is no homogeneity between the eternal and the phenomenal."²

Al-Qushayrī began Chapter I of his *Risāla* on the dogma of the ṣūfīs with this saying of al-Junayd, as being the foundation of their faith, and mentions it again in the chapter on Unification, saying: "Al-Junayd said: 'Unification is the separation of the Eternal from that which was originated in Time, and departure from familiar haunts and separation from brethren and forgetfulness of what is known and unknown, and God only in place of All.'"³

The later writers, too, have put stress on this sentence; for instance, Tahanawī, in his definition of Unification by the ṣūfīs, said: "The result of all the hints and signs is in brief that 'Unification is the separation of the Eternal, etc.'"⁴

Ibn Taymiya, who was an extreme Sunni, quotes this phrase of al-Junayd, stresses and praises it. He says: "What Junayd has said about the difference between the Eternal and the originated, is something to safeguard many of the mystics from the danger of following the wrong path." Some of them have scolded Junayd for this phrase, like Ibn 'Arabī in his book, "*Al-Isrā ila Maqām al-Asrā*," in which he says: "O Junayd, who could distinguish between two things, except if he is neither the one nor the other." And Ibn Taymiya argues against

¹ *Lumā'*, p. 30.

² *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, p. 281.

³ Qushayrī, *Risāla*, v. 3, p. 136.

⁴ Tahanawī, *Kashshāf Istilāḥāt al-funūn*, v. 2, p. 1468.

Ibn 'Arabī proving that he is wrong and that al-Junayd is right.¹

At any rate, the meaning of *ifrād al-qidam*, separation of the Eternal, or we may also say the Absolute, is not only a separation (*remotio*) carried out theoretically, by reason, but a practical experiencing of the Infinite with the extinction of everything finite. This will become clearer as we proceed with other definitions of al-Junayd.

Al-Junayd has illustrated *Tawhīd* in its various aspects in many of his letters. He made it especially clear when he classified the stages of the *Muwahhidūn* and described in detail their respective features. He says in one of his letters:

"Know that *Tawhīd* is found in four stages in people. The first is the *Tawhīd* of the ordinary people; the second is the *Tawhīd* of those who are well versed in formal religious knowledge. The third and fourth stages are experienced by the elect who have esoteric knowledge (*ma'rifa*)."²

The theologians do not agree with this classification of those who possess *Tawhīd*, saying that this word *Tawhīd* could not be classified neither from the viewpoint of God nor from the viewpoint of man. *Tawhīd*, they say, is only a right way between two wrong extremes and nothing more. And so that majority of theologians hold that the faith in each and all of the believers is one and the same, and they differ only in the manner of approach.

Al-Ghazzālī solves this difficulty by saying that the classification of *Tawhīd* means that everyone is in a special state different from any other.³

Certainly al-Junayd, in his endeavour after classification, has in mind that state of every individual. They all believe in God, but are in various stages according to their kind of belief.

This question of the degree of belief takes up a large proportion of the discussion between the theologians.⁴ But al-Junayd analyses this question in another way than the theologians.

He approaches it in a psychological and ethical way, describing the effect and result in the person of the believer. So his distinction is not speculative, but through a mature experience and fine human understanding, an approach which we meet for the first time in Islamic thought.

He describes the *Tawhīd* of ordinary people as follows:

"As for the *Tawhīd* of ordinary people, it consists in the assertion of the Unity of God, in the discarding of any conception of gods, companions, opposites, equals, likenesses to God, but with the retention of hopes and fears in forces other than God. This type of *Tawhīd* possesses a measure of efficacy since the assertion persists."¹

This simple *Tawhīd* is what Islām demands of every believer as a basis of faith in God. Such a *muwahhid* has not the complete awareness of God, because while these two things, hope and fear, in forces other than God, are still existent in the consciousness of the believers, they prevent the complete realization of God. If one possesses the complete power of *Tawhīd*, these things will certainly disappear just as, when the sun shines, the stars disappear.²

Then Junayd describes the second stage as follows:

"As for the *Tawhīd* of those who are well versed in formal religious knowledge, it consists in the assertion of the Unity of God, in the discarding of any conception of gods, companions, opposites, equals, likenesses to God, combined with the performance of the positive commands and the avoidance of that which is forbidden so far as external action is concerned, all that being a result of their hopes, fears and desires; this type of *Tawhīd* has a measure of efficacy since the assertion of the Unity of God is being publicly proved."³

The difference between these two states is that, while the man who lives in the first state may not be able to master life and to reach the standard of decency, balance of mind, reason, truthfulness and goodness in society, and the state of perform-

¹ *Minhaj as-Sunna*, v. 3, p. 85, ff. Massignon, "Essai sur les origines du lexique technique," p. 277, footnote 2.

² *Risāla*, No. 16.

³ *Al-Imlā'* 'ala *ishkālāt al-Ihyā'*, p. 98.

⁴ See as example *Bukhari in Kitāb al-Imān* (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*).

¹ *Risāla*, No. 16.

² *Luma'*, p. 31.

³ *Risāla*, No. 16.

ance of the commands of Religion and avoidance of what is forbidden, a man in the second state possesses all these virtues, and thus he will prove through his virtue, his whole life and actions in society, the Unity of God. Yet his motive for being good may still be partly rooted in his hopes, fears and desires.

These two stages are not the highest stage of awareness of God which man can reach. So al-Junayd goes further to the next state:

“As for the first type of esoteric *Tawhīd*, it consists in the assertion of the Unity of God, the discarding of the conception of the things referred to, combined with the performance of God's command externally and internally, and the cessation of hopes and fears in forces other than God, all this resulting from the ideas which tally with the awareness of God's presence with him, with God's call to him, and his answer to God.”¹

This muwahhid still preserves his individuality. This state is not the complete Unification which the muwahhid can reach as he is still aware of something other than God, namely, himself. Yet higher still for Junayd is that other experience, the last stage of Unification, which he describes as follows:

“The second type of esoteric *Tawhīd* consists in existence without individuality (*shabāh*) before God with no third person as intermediary between them, a figure over which His decrees pass as He in His Omnipotence determines, and that he should be sunk in the flooding seas of His Unity, completely obliterated both from himself and from God's call to him and his answer to God. It is a state where the devotee has achieved the true realization of the Oneness of God in true proximity to Him. He is lost to sense and action because God fulfils in him what He hath willed of him.”²

That is, he is in the Will of God and has no more a will of his own. This is not the absolute subjection of will and personal desire to the Eternal Will of God, as the foregoing state. It is more than mere resignation to God's Will. It means that the individual will become none other than the very Will of God,

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

who wills and works, lives and creates, through our will, so that there is but one Will.

This saying of al-Junayd indicates that, according to Hujwiri, “the muwahhid has no regard to himself so that he becomes like an atom, as he was in the eternal past, when the Covenant of Unification was made. It means, as the same time, the annihilation of the individual when he is overpowered by the revelation of His majesty, so that he becomes a passive instrument and a subtle substance that feels nothing, and his body is a repository for the mysteries of God to Whom his speech and actions are to be attributed.”¹

This highest stage of Unification, as Junayd witnesses it, is based on two theories of his system:

- (1) The theory of *Mithāq*, which means the relation between God the Creator and the human creature, and realization by man of his place before God.
- (2) The theory of *Fanā'*, Obliteration, which means that man fulfils the Unity of God through losing his individuality and being present only in God.

We proceed to analyse this last state through an explanation of these two complementary theories.

¹ Kashf al-Mahjūb, p. 28.

CHAPTER VII

THE THEORY OF MĪTHĀQ

Junayd continues his description of the final stage of *Tawhīd*:

"This implies that in his final stage the worshipper returns to his first state, that he is as he was before he existed."¹

Junayd holds the belief that the worshipper before his corporal existence had another existence. He proves this from the verse of the Qur'ān:

"When thy Lord had brought forth their descendants from the loins of the Sons of Adam and made them to witness concerning themselves, 'Am I not,' said He, 'your Lord?' They said: 'Yes! we do so testify.'"²

He interprets this verse as follows:

"In this verse God tells you that He spoke to them at a time when they did not exist, except so far as they existed in Him. This existence is not the same type of existence as is usually attributed to God's creatures; it is a type of existence which only God knows and only He is aware of. God knows their existence; embracing them he sees them in the beginning when they are non-existent and unaware of their future existence in this world. The existence of these is timeless."³

And also:

"When He called them and they answered quickly, their answer was a gracious and generous gift from Him; it was His answer on their behalf when He granted them their being, their function being that of interlocutors. He gave them knowledge of Him when they were only concepts which He had conceived. He then wished it, and made them

like seeds which He transformed at His Will into human seeds, and put them in the loins of Adam. . . . In this verse Allah has stated that He spoke to them when they had no formal existence. This is possible because Allah perceives them in their spiritual existence. This spiritual existence connotes their knowledge of God's spirituality without in any way postulating their being aware of their own individuality."¹

So, according to Junayd, there are two types of existence: the one being divine existence (existence in Him), which is timeless and which we have before our coming here, and the other being existence in this created world. He described the first as follows:

"This then is a divine existence and a God-like conception which becomes only Him."²

And further:

"This type of existence is without doubt the most perfect and penetrating. It is the most significant, dominant, and is more adequately described as conquering, victorious and truly overwhelming, than the normal existence of which the worshipper is aware, because in the Divine existence his individuality is entirely obliterated and his worldly existence departs from him. This is because no human quality survives nor does normal human existence persist, as we have made clear in describing the Divine qualities of God's Truth and God's Victory."³

And also:

"Whereas their first existence is completely real, is better, higher, and more conducive to God's conquest and victory, and to their complete absorption in Him by means of that which He has granted them."⁴

But al-Junayd refrains from giving a detailed description of this type of existence. He says:

¹ Risāla.

² Risāla, No. 6.

³ Risāla, No. 6.

⁴ Risāla, No. 7.

¹ Risāla, No. 16.

² Qur'ān 7, v. 166, 167.

³ Risāla.

"It is a type of existence which only God knows and only He is cognisant of."¹

And also:

"It follows then that, at this stage (of his), God has existence of a sort which is known only to Him and recognized only by Him."²

On the other hand, he tells us who existed and how. He says:

"Who existed, and how could he have existed before he had existence? Did anyone answer to God's question other than the pure, fine and holy souls in accordance with God's Omnipotence and Perfect Will?"³

This idea of al-Junayd of a pre-existence of the soul, real existence before our becoming here, and existence different from our "secondary," derived existence as created beings, seems to echo Neo-platonic ideas and is similar to what Plotinus says in the *Enneads*:

"Before we had our becoming here, we existed There, men other than now; we were pure souls. Intelligence inbound with the entire of reality, not fenced off, integral to that All. . . . Then it was as if One voice sounded. One word was uttered and from every side an ear attended and received and there was an effective hearing; now we are become a dual thing, no longer that which we were at first, dormant, and in a sense no longer present."⁴

About our secondary existence as created beings Plotinus says:

"By this non-being of course we are not to understand something that does not exist, but only something of an utterly different form from Authentic-Being; the non-being we are thinking of is, rather, an image of Being or perhaps something still more removed than even an image."⁵

This differentiation reminds us of the differentiation which al-Junayd makes between real existence and our secondary, not real, existence. He has already made this differentiation in his

definition of *Taṣawwuf*, where he says: "*Taṣawwuf* in essence; is an attribute of God, but by image, it is an attribute of man." (See p. 87.) This means that, inasmuch as our being is conceived by God, it is real. In our opinion Junayd interpreted the Qu'rān verse on the *Mithāq* through the Neo-platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul. In his mind there was a deep harmony between the verse of the Qu'rān and the teachings of mystical philosophy.

If we try to sum up this theory and to describe this highest state of Unification which the worshipper can attain, we find that the worshipper returns to his primordial state where he has been before he was created. That is, he departs from his worldly existence, his normal human existence does not continue, and hence he exists in God and is completely absorbed in Him. It is thus that the *muwaḥḥid* can attain the real *Tawḥīd*. As long as he preserves his individuality he cannot attain this full state of *Tawḥīd*, as the continued persistence of his individuality means that something other than God is still present.

Junayd seems to aim at that stage when he says:

"In this state He has full possession of them and has destroyed their individuality and has removed their characteristics as we perceive it.

"This is because Existence, after complete suppression of person is not the same as normal existence. The ultimate Truth of God is now refulgent and His Victory is complete."¹

And also:

"It is for this reason that we said, that when God granted existence to His worshippers, He caused, as it were, His desire to flow over them according to His Will."²

This means that, according to Junayd, God, when He creates a human being, has already the intention to overwhelm him and to make him fully One with Himself again. Even in this world, if He chooses him and if man lives up to His choice, He will obliterate his individuality and make him realize the Oneness of God. Thus Junayd continues:

"In view of the foregoing we said that God has obliterated what appears to the worshipper, and when He has

¹ *Risāla*, No. 6.

² *Risāla*, No. 7.

³ *Risāla*, No. 14.

⁴ *Enneads*, V 1, 4. 14. (See "The Essence of Plotinus," compiled by J. H. Turnbull.)

⁵ *Enneads*, V 1, 8. 3.

¹ *Risāla*, No. 6.

² *Risāla*, No. 6.

overwhelmed him, God shows Himself as the most overpowering, the perfect conqueror, the completely victorious."¹

In this state, God is the direct actor according to His perfection, and what man does and wills in this state is nothing but the Will and Action of God.

This state is not something which the worshipper attains unaided, but it is a gift of God to the worshipper whom He chooses. Junayd proves this from the *Ḥadīth*:

"My servant draws nigh unto me by works of supererogation and I love him; and when I love him I am his ear, so that he hears by Me, and his eye, so that he sees by Me."²

Junayd comments on this *Ḥadīth*, explaining that this should not be understood literally. The meaning can be only:

"That it is God who strengthens him; who enables him to achieve this; who guides him and who gives the vision of what He wishes in the manner He wishes, so that he achieves rightness and is in accord with Truth. This, then, is the act of God in him; the gift of God to him and only to him. It is not to be attributed positively to the worshipper, since it does not originate from him. Nay, it comes over him from elsewhere and must, therefore, be attributed to another source. This, then, is a possible interpretation of the secret and independent state of the nature described above."³

This whole state is what Junayd meant by his definition of *Taṣawwuf*: "*Taṣawwuf* is that God should make you die from yourself and should make you live in Him."⁴

He further says:

"The living man in the one for whom life finds itself on the life of his Creator, not the one who founds his life on the subsistence of his bodily form (*ḥaykal*), so that the reality of his life will be his death, as his death in the access to the stage of his primordial Life."⁵

How can the worshipper die in himself and live in God—how can he achieve and fulfil this state? Junayd explains this in his theory of *Fanā'*.

¹ *Risāla*, No. 6.

² *Risāla*, No. 6.

³ *Risāla*, No. 6.

⁴ *Qushayrī*, p. 126.

⁵ *Baqlī*, v. 11, p. 173. Quoted by Massignon: "*Essai sur les origines du lexique technique*," p. 277.

CHAPTER VIII

THE THEORY OF *FANĀ'*

Both al-Junayd's theory of *Mīthāq* (Covenant) and his theory of *Fanā'* (Oblivion) show us the road to the same end, the highest state of Unification. Both *Mīthāq* and *Fanā'* are different approaches to *Tawḥīd*, the former explaining the state of Return to God, the latter describing the way, method, training and successive steps to attain this state. Thus, for the *muwāḥḥid* to reach this state of his divine existence, he will have to lose his human existence, which is a secondary one, so that he may realize his divine existence in the Oneness with God, which is the primary one. So, in fact, the two theories are mutually complementary.

Junayd recognizes three stages of *Fanā'* (oblivion, obliteration), which he defines and expounds as follows:

First: "The obliteration of attributes, characteristics and natural qualities in your motives when you carry out your religious duties, making great efforts and doing the opposite of what you may desire, and compelling yourself to do the things which you do not wish to do."

Second: "The obliteration of your pursuit after pleasures and even the sensation of pleasure in obedience to God's behests—so that you are exclusively His, without any intermediary means of contact."

Third: "The obliteration of the consciousness of having attained the vision of God at the final stage of ecstasy when God's victory over you is complete. At this stage you are obliterated and have eternal life with God, and you exist only in the existence of God because you have been obliterated. Your physical being continues but your individuality has departed."¹

The first stage is concerned with man's active life, his *vita*

¹ *Risāla*.

activa. Man has to put behind himself his personal affections and impulses, his calculations and passions—this is what al-Junayd describes as the “attributes and qualities of his aiming”—while carrying out his duties as a Moslem. He will need a continued moral training, a conscious ascetic way of life in order to fulfil this task, and will often have to act against the wishes and desires of his own soul which disturb and entangle the purity of his aiming. This state of *Fanā'* is of a moral and objective order.

The second stage implies that the worshipper should cut himself off from all the worldly pleasures of his senses and even from the enjoyment of his own good deeds in fulfilling the religious injunctions of God, thus remaining without any intermediary object which might serve man to put himself into indirect contact with God. This stage of *Fanā'* is of a mental and subjective order.

The third stage implies that man loses even the consciousness of his having reached the vision of God. Facing God, his consciousness of himself becomes extinct. This is the state of which we have heard previously, when the worshipper is entirely overwhelmed and engulfed by God—the complete victory of God over him. At this stage the individuality of the worshipper is quite obliterated—though for his fellow men he still has his physical body and appearance. In himself he has now no separate existence any more. His former being is, so to speak, dead. He has returned to eternal life—he lives with and in God only.

This state—the final state of *Fanā'* includes *Baqā'*, the abiding and continuing in God. *Fanā'* and *Baqā'* mean the same state from a different aspect. When one has reached the complete *Fanā'* of one's individuality in God, one, at the same time, is remaining and perpetuated in God. *Fanā'* is not merely the cessation of Self, like the Buddhist Nirvāna, but, as we have seen, it includes the continuation of the worshipper's self in God.¹

At this point we gain a very important insight into al-Junayd's conception of God. Though *Fanā'* might lead to Pantheism if it were an end in itself, this, as we see it, is not the case with the

Fanā' of al-Junayd. His *Fanā'*, as we see it, is consistent only with the *Baqā'* in God. The personal character of God remains even in this state and there remains—in God—the eternal self of the worshipper. This is so, even in the state of *Fanā'*—before the worshipper returns to himself (state of Sobriety).¹

We have to keep in our mind that even in this highest state the Worshipper cannot comprehend the full Reality of God, though he is “taken up by God” and lives in Him. Al-Junayd says:

“Even so, in this divine state, it is not possible for him to approach the Ultimate Reality which now possesses him. It is only in this state that God can be seen in His exalted Nature, and His Beatific Names be appreciated.”²

Thus, even in this state, the worshipper cannot be identical with God (*Ittiḥād*). Al-Junayd insists on this point in all his teaching. He says:

“At this stage, then, when God has complete possession of them, *Balā'* overtakes them because of their human qualities which still persist, because of their enjoyment of physical pleasures. This, then, is the veil between them and God, which God has placed between them and Him, so that they can still retain a measure of their individuality and use both their physical and spiritual faculties in this environment of glory, in this consequence of praise (*dhikr*) in the victory of God's conquest. How can this be known to you if none but the elect know it, and only they can discover it, and only they are capable of this knowledge? Can you comprehend how it is that they should seek God and yet not reach Him though they are helped by God's revelation to them, and are aided by the help of God's Truths? It is because God has made them cognisant of an aspect of His existence and given them complete conviction of His hidden secrets which are the path to Him when the human qualities are obliterated and human needs are nullified.”³

Fanā', as al-Junayd experienced it, is thus not the passing

¹ Nicholson, who is well aware of this theological meaning of Junayd's *Baqā'*, yet sees this preservation of Self only in the following state of Sobriety. Cf. “The Ideal of Personality,” p. 14.

² *Risāla*, No. 6.

³ *Risāla*, No. 6.

away of man's being in God's being . . . "since they are wholly separate from His and lose their own eyes, God being firmly established in His Power and Glory," but it is the passing away of man's will in God's Will, as we have seen before.

This point is very important in Junayd's mystic teaching on *Fanā'* and it has been misunderstood by later interpreters. Sarrāj was aware of this error, for he says: "Some mystics of Baghdād have erred in their doctrine that, when they pass away from their qualities, they enter into the qualities of God. This involves incarnation (*bulūl*) or leads to the Christian belief concerning Jesus. The doctrine in question has been attributed to some of the ancients, but its true meaning is this: that, when a man goes forth from his own qualities and enters into the qualities of God, he goes forth from his own will, which is a gift to him from God, and enters into the Will of God, knowing that his will has been given to him by God, and that by virtue of this gift he can stop seeing himself and become entirely devoted to God; and this is one of the stages of those that seek *Tawḥīd* (Unification with God). Those who have erred in this doctrine have failed to observe that the qualities of God are not God. To make God identical with His qualities is to be guilty of infidelity, because God does not descend into the heart, but that which descends into the heart is faith in God and belief in His unity and reverence for the thought of Him."¹

Sarrāj also says: "Some have abstained from food and drink, fancying that when a man's body is weakened it is possible that he may lose his humanity and be invested with the attributes of divinity. The ignorant persons who hold this erroneous doctrine cannot distinguish between humanity and the inborn qualities (*akḥkāq*) of humanity. Humanity does not depart from man any more than blackness departs from that which is black or whiteness from that which is white, but the inborn qualities of humanity are changed and transmuted by the all-powerful radiance that is shed upon them from the Divine Realities. The attributes of humanity are not the essence of humanity. Those who speak of the doctrine of *Fanā'* mean the passing away of regarding one's own actions and works of

devotion through continuously regarding God as the doer of these actions on behalf of His servant."¹

In this highest state of *Fanā'*, according to al-Junayd, where the worshipper has lost his worldly individuality, he yet is still separate from God. Many veils have been removed, but a veil still persists between God and man. This condition, as Junayd experienced it, is indeed full of longing—and pain. It is a state of suspense, of anguish and of thirst for God. To bear it, is thus a test to the soul, *Balā'*. God will help him and sustain him in this test of having given up his worldly individuality and yet not being able to merge in the Absolute. Yet the soul may derive spiritual pleasure from its *Balā'*, this test and ordeal in facing God. Junayd says:

"They are consumed with longing for Him who has brought them *Balā'*, and moan constantly in this *second* loss of their individuality. This loss has been a grievous wound to them, their new state has depressed them. They grieve, suffering deeply as they seek after God. They are overcome by a thirst which is all-consuming and constantly increasing. The pursuit of knowledge of God is now the constant preoccupation of the soul, it is entirely devoted to submerging its individuality in the attainment of intimacy with God. This thirst for God is an anguish even more intense than the mourning for a beloved one. God makes of every external form a sign. He gives to the soul the taste of poverty and renews for the soul knowledge of the experience of spiritual effort.

"The soul accepts the spiritual burden with its implication of suffering, seeks for its cure, and is preoccupied with that divine revelation vouchsafed to it. Consequently, it is able to look on the remote with the eye of propinquity, to be closer to God because a veil has been removed and it is no longer completely concealed. Though the soul has *Balā'*, it is not rejected. How can it be hidden from God by a veil when it is, as it were, a captive bound before Him? God has allowed the suppression of the individuality when man has *Balā'*. The soul no longer arrogates a degree of import-

¹ *Luma'*, p. 432.

¹ *Luma'*, p. 426.

ance to its individuality but is amply satisfied with God's love and nearness.

"Such, then, is the infinite duration of this newly found spiritual life and the intensity of the stage of *Balā'* that the suppression of the individuality is completely submerged by the lightning flesh of God's regard.

"As a result, the soul derives spiritual pleasures from *Balā'* and is delighted with its *Balā'* with God, because it can enjoy propinquity with God and the wound of *Balā'* is soothed. The soul is not bent down under the burden of *Balā'* nor does it chafe at its spiritual load. Their experience makes heroes of them—because of the secrets revealed to them they stay conquered by God, awaiting His commands, that Allah may designate what shall be done."¹

We come to the conclusion that al-Junayd, who has experienced as well as analysed the highest state of Unification (*Tawḥīd*) and who has clearly described the *Mithāq* and the *Fanā'*, has yet neither been swept into the sea of Pantheism, which would be losing consciousness of God and man and acknowledging one existence only, nor has he made himself, the worshipper, equal with God, deifying man (*Ittiḥād*). But he has experienced and described Unification as losing his will, which characterizes the worldly individuality, being possessed by God and returning into the life of his eternal self in God. Thus he would be unified with God, to the extent that this is granted by God to His creatures.

We may count al-Junayd as the classical witness, the teacher and interpreter of *Tawḥīd* in its most profound, aware and disciplined form. This is his place in the development of Islamic Mysticism. He was not the first who spoke of *Tawḥīd*. His teacher, Sarī' as-Saqāṭī and, before him, Mar'ūf al-Karkhī, have done so, teachers to whom al-Junayd always felt indebted. But al-Junayd has put the *Tawḥīd* into the centre of the system of ṣūfism and has left to us a clear and explicit doctrine of *Tawḥīd* in his works. This doctrine, he taught, as we have seen, in his oral teachings as well as letters in his small esoteric circle to those who could understand. Yet some of his pupils and later

mystics were not able to grasp the meaning of this doctrine as a whole, in its integrity, but have picked out this or that part of it, thus sometimes being led into exaggeration and error.

Rightly understood and fully comprehended, al-Junayd is a sound and lucid guide to ṣūfism. His teaching on *Tawḥīd* is basic, and is echoed in the doctrine of most ṣūfī orders right up to modern times.¹

¹ Risāla, No. 6.

¹ Cf. The literature of the Shadiliya Order, especially the books of Ibn 'Aṭā al-Sikandari'.

CHAPTER IX

THE DOCTRINE OF SOBRIETY, ŞAḤW

All those who have reached the state of *Tawḥīd*, having lost their individuality, having passed away from their human existence to live in God, all those who have been overwhelmed, and are entirely in the possession of their conqueror, their Lord, are without a will of their own, in the Will of God. It is not possible for them to think of doing or aiming at anything in this world. In this state the laws and standards which normally apply are without significance or meaning since for them everything is God's Will, whose instrument they are. The distinction between good and evil has become meaningless—since everything coming from God is good.

This situation may logically lead the ṣūfī to an attitude by which he puts himself outside the laws and order of society. In fact, some of the ṣūfis came to ignore all the injunctions of the religious law, all the religious precepts and duties; "the performance of the positive commands and the avoidance of that which is forbidden," saying, that if one is in the Will of God, one need not follow the orders given by Him to men in their worldly state. These laws, they maintain, are intended by Him for the benefit of the common people, but they are superfluous for those who live in union with God.¹

This complete indifference to the laws of religion and the established customs of society may lead the ṣūfī to a special kind of libertinism, as the history of ṣūfism has shown repeatedly.

We find in many ṣūfis a completely negative attitude to religious works. We can see this in the story which is reported of al-Junayd. A man said to al-Junayd: "Amongst the men of God (ṣūfis), there are those who hold that the keeping away

from activity belongs to piety and fear of God." Al-Junayd answered: "That is the doctrine of people who treat religious works as of no worth, which I hold to be a grievous sin. Even the man who steals or commits adultery is still in a better condition than he who holds that view. In fact, those who know God receive the works of God and in return render them back to God. And, if I were to live a thousand years, I should not like to be found lacking in the works of piety even as much as a single grain of dust."

So we come to the ethical theory of al-Junayd, his theory of Sobriety (Şaḥw) which, with *Tawḥīd*, is the basis of his whole system of Mysticism. Hujwīrī said of this doctrine of al-Junayd: "It is the best known and most celebrated of all doctrines and all Shaykhs have adopted it, notwithstanding that there is considerable difference in their statements of the ethics of ṣūfism."²

Al-Junayd recognized and experienced that the highest stage of Unification already referred to, the stage of *Fanā'*, when man has given up his will in the Will of God, is not the last stage, nor the final goal. This state of *Fanā'* may be vitiated, according to al-Junayd, by ecstatic drunkenness. It cannot be the exclusive aim of the saint who also has a responsibility to his fellow men, because it involves the disturbance of his balance, the loss of his sanity and self-control.

God does not wish to keep His worshipper in isolation for ever. Al-Junayd says:

"In this stage of companionship, the range of his movements is limited; he can only go from God to God, for God and in God. He has *Fanā'*, and this too is obliterated because he persists in *Baqā'* only through complete obliteration. God desires to return His worshipper to the community and does so, making clear the evidence of His grace to him, so that the lights of His gifts in the return of his individual characteristics scintillate and attract the community to him who appreciate him."³

Al-Junayd says further:

¹ Qushayrī, p. 19.

Hilyat al-Awliyā', v. 10, p. 278.

² Hujwīrī, p. 189.

³ Risāla, No. 11.

¹ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzī, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, v. 1, pp. 135, 138, 143. Cf. Ibn Ḥazm Fiṣal, v. 4, pp. 188, 226.

"He is himself, after he has not been truly himself. He is present in himself and in God after having been present in God and absent in himself. This is because he has left the intoxication of God's overwhelming *ghalaba* (victory), and comes to the clarity of sobriety, and contemplation is once more restored to him so that he can put everything in its right place and assess it correctly. Once more he assumes his individual attributes, after *Fanā'*. His personal qualities persist in him, and his actions in this world, when he has reached the zenith of spiritual achievement vouchsafed by God, become a pattern for his fellow men."¹

Thus, no one can be a true Shaykh and teacher whom God will make a model to others, whom God trusts with a message to his fellow men, and whose life will be beneficial to men around him, except that, after being with God and absorbed in God, he returns unto himself and so will be one of the community, acting as they should, and accepting the law and order which God has established amongst them.

But when the *ṣūfī* comes to this state of Sobriety and thus returns to the community, he still does not quite get away from the state of *Fanā'* which he has experienced. But he keeps this experience like a secret treasure concealed within himself, inside his new state. In a manner of speaking, it radiates through him when he lives, speaks and works amidst the community. He lives, as it were, at the same time in God and in the community.

These two states are only two facets of the same crystal. Al-Junayd says:

"After their union with Him, He separates them from Himself (and grants them their individuality again). Then He makes them absent (from this world) when they are in union with Him, and makes them present (in this world) when He has separated them from Himself (and granted them their individuality again). Thus it is that their absence from this world is but a facet of their presence with God and their presence in this world is a necessary cause of their absence from God."²

In this state of Sobriety which al-Junayd experienced and described, the *ṣūfī* is, so to speak, released to return to the community and to serve God's creatures. He will be able to spread the gifts he has from God to his fellow men, to each according to his degree of capacity; he will support the simple people through his piety; he will help those who have embarked on theological study as a theologian; he will lead and teach the young; and he will be a companion to the initiated, to his fellow mystics, and will share with them his most sublime experience. Thus, in his state of perfection, he will not be isolated, but with what he has received from God, he will be able to help others.

The combination of these two states, the state of *Fanā'* and the state of *Sobriety*, in one and the same person, is difficult to achieve and uphold. It will be possible only to those whom God grants His continued grace. To be present and absent at the same time means a continual strain on the self. Al-Junayd says in a short poem:

"I have realized that which is within me.

And my tongue has conversed with Thee in secret.

And we are united in one respect,

But we are separated in another.

Although awe has hidden Thee from the glances of mine eye,
Ecstasy has made Thee near to my inmost parts."¹

In this state al-Junayd experienced various waves of feeling. In one of his letters he says that he felt the sadness and grief of his soul longing back to God. It feels as if it were banished from the presence of God and the accomplished living in Him. He says:

"But when God brings the spirit back to its normal state, he re-establishes it and gives it back to its own nature. Thus the experience with God and from God is hidden, the soul grieves, and becomes used to its normal state, because it has lost its first perfection and highest favour. It has been brought back to the bounds of reason and perception. Its regret is profound and its anguish for what it has lost continues in its conscious existence and present reality.

¹ *Risāla*, No. 8.

² *Risāla*, No. 5.

¹ *Lumā'*, p. 212.

This, then, is the reason for the soul's longing, its needs have returned to it; how should it not suffer for being banished from God? The soul was satisfied and now thirsts anew."¹

Al-Junayd says that it is characteristic of this state that the soul will seek for sights of beauty and aesthetic accomplishment in this world—a longing which is well known to many mystics and which is the source of many of the most beautiful pages in classical Persian poetry—it springs from the spiritual refinement of the soul of the mystic and its longing for the beautiful. For the mystic the beautiful in this world is an echo of his experience before God. But all these things of beauty and accomplishment which he may see in this world are a source of pain to the soul of the mystic, as they remind him that perfection is unobtainable here—they remind him of the lost Beloved for Whom he is always homesick. This deep nostalgia of all mystics.

Al-Junayd says further:

"Thus it is that the souls of those who have known God seek after the green meadows, the beautiful vistas, the fresh green gardens—but all those other things which they long for, echoing their experience before God, are a source of pain for them, because they serve only to remind them that they are unattainable, and recall the Lost Beloved. Sad indeed is their lot!"²

On the other hand, the mystic in this state of release will often feel at liberty; he will neither care nor worry; whether he is alone or amidst the multitude will be a matter of indifference to him; he will not be impressed by outside currents and influences; he will be independent of the things of this world and will enjoy an otherwise inconceivable state of liberty.

Al-Junayd, on looking at his earlier and his present life, said:

"For a time I was such that the inhabitants of heaven and earth wept over my bewilderment. Then again I became such that I wept over their absence. And now my state is such that I have no knowledge either of them or of myself."³

¹ Risāla, No. 4.

² Risāla, No. 4.

³ Hujwiri, p. 255.

The state of Sobriety is sometimes termed by the mystics "The Second Separation" (*al-farq al-thānī*), since they call the state before *Fanā* "The First Separation" (*al-farq al-awwal*). They also sometimes call the state of Sobriety "The Natural Separation" (*al-farq al-ṭabīʿī*), or they call it "Union of Union" (*jam' al jam'*), while calling the state of *Fanā* itself "Union" (*jam'*).

Of those two states of the mystic, the one being Intoxication or Ecstatic Drunkenness, which is one aspect of being overwhelmed by God, the other being Sobriety, al-Junayd puts a strong stress on Sobriety. He is opposed to the school of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, who puts the main stress on Intoxication.

Hujwiri, whose book we have to consider as an essential source for *sūfī* schools in general, and for al-Junayd's teachings in particular, gives an account of the two attitudes. He says of Abū Yazīd's school: "Abū Yazīd and his followers prefer Intoxication to Sobriety. They say that Sobriety involves the fixity and equilibrium of human attributes which are the greatest veil between God and man, whereas Intoxication involves the destruction of human attributes like foresight and choice and the annihilation of a man's self-control in God, so that only those faculties survive in him that do not belong to the human genus, and they are the most complete and perfect."

Concerning al-Junayd and his school, he says: "Al-Junayd and his followers prefer Sobriety to Intoxication. They say that Intoxication is evil, because it involves the disturbance of one's normal state and the loss of sanity and self-control; and, inasmuch as the principle of all things is sought, either by way of annihilation or subsistence, of effacement or affirmation, the principle of verification cannot be attained unless the seeker is sane. Blindness will never release anyone from the bondage and corruption of the phenomena. The fact that people remain in the phenomena and forget God is due to their not seeing things as they really are. For, if they saw, they would avoid falling into this error.

"Seeing is of two kinds. He who looks at anything sees it either with the eye of subsistence (*Baqā*) or with the eye of annihilation (*Fanā*). If he does so with the eye of subsistence, he will perceive that the whole universe is imperfect in com-

parison with his own subsistence (in God), for he does not regard the phenomena as self-subsistent, and if he looks with the eye of annihilation (in God), he will perceive that all created things are non-existent beside the subsistence of God. In either case, he turns away from created things. On this account the Apostle said in his prayer: 'O God, show us things as they are, because whoever thus sees them, finds rest.'

"Now such vision cannot be properly attained except in the state of Sobriety and the intoxicated have no knowledge thereof."¹

In this issue, Hujwiri chooses to follow the school of al-Junayd. He says: "My teacher, who followed the doctrine of al-Junayd, used to say that Intoxication is the playing-ground of children, but Sobriety is the battle-field of struggle and death of men. I say, in agreement with my teacher, that the perfection of the state of the man who has been intoxicated is Sobriety."²

If we survey al-Junayd's doctrine of Sobriety, we come to the conclusion that his attitude to it and this teaching of his are something unique. In the history of mysticism in general, we are accustomed to find mystics who speak of their experience of unification with God and of being overwhelmed by God. There is always the danger that a man who is distinguished by God with such a degree of grace might remain isolated and be lost to the community. Some mystics, it is true, have returned to the community as preachers and teachers and sometimes as founders of orders. But it is very rare that a mystic, a man who has undergone all the stages of mystical experience, can so far distance himself from his own experience as al-Junayd does, and gives us a clear theory of his state of accomplished Unification, and his following state of return into himself and into the world. This return of the mystic, as an altered and more perfect being, into the human community—with a special mission from God to his fellow men—is what al-Junayd's theory of Sobriety means. This attitude of a mystic is by no means negative towards human civilization.

¹ Hujwiri, p. 185.

² Ibid.

That men with such a high and rare religious experience and such an intimate personal approach to God as were given to al-Junayd would, following in his footsteps, return to the community, in order to work for the benefit of their fellow men, was, as we feel, of significance for all the wider fields of human activity. Such men would be able to face at the same time the mystery of God and the tasks of the world in what al-Junayd describes as the stage of Sobriety. We mainly think of the field of teaching to which al-Junayd himself was devoted. It is not the place here to measure the degree of influence which this attitude—at the same time mystic, clear and active—may have had in the fields of Philosophy, of Art and Literature, and at times even of beneficent statesmanship.

The part played by *ṣūfism* in spreading and integrating Islām and Islāmic civilization throughout many lands, from this early age through the centuries—to the present, is, to a large degree, an outcome of this attitude. That al-Junayd has been a guide to this attitude should not be forgotten.

CHAPTER X

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (*MA'RIFA*)

The *ṣūfis*, in general, hold that the knowledge of God cannot be acquired by means of reason (*'aql*), as this knowledge is beyond the ken of reason. The sphere of reason is limited by its very nature to objects which are finite.

God is not only immaterial, but also beyond the reach of logical comprehension. The knowledge of God, according to the *ṣūfis*, can only be acquired by a state of the mind of man, which would allow God to grant him the gift of illumination and inspiration; it can only be reached by revelation.

In this tenet they differ from the theologians by rejecting rational knowledge (*'ilm*) as irrelevant. Instead of rational knowledge (*'ilm*) which, according to them, is insufficient for acquiring a comprehension of God, they use the term *ma'rifa*, which is exactly like and possibly derived from the gnosis of Hellenistic theosophy—direct intuitive knowledge of God based on Revelation and Vision. They see in *ma'rifa* (gnosis) the goal of the mystic, and they call the one who achieves this goal *'arīf* (gnostic). They therefore value *ma'rifa* higher than *'ilm*.

Al-Qushayrī says: "According to the *ṣūfis*, *ma'rifa* is the attitude of the man who acknowledges God in His names and attributes; who is further sincere in his actions, who frees himself from the blameworthy traits of character and from weaknesses, who at all times stands at the gate and continuously lets his heart dwell with God, so that God would grant him friendly reception, and who in all his conditions is sincere and free from the influence of his self, and who in his heart does not listen to any influence which calls him in a direction other than that to God. When thus he has become alien to creature, free from the frailties of self, liberated from the bonds of human contacts and mental distractions, when in his innermost being he is in continuous communion with God, and at each moment

truly comes back to God, when he has knowledge of God by receiving His secrets concerning the operating of His decrees; then he will be called *'arīf* and his condition will be called *ma'rifa*.¹

The theologians (*mutakallimūn*—the schoolmen), on the other hand, in their conception of the knowledge of God, do not make a distinction between direct and indirect knowledge of God; they hold that knowledge of God is based on evidence and on reason; they may make a distinction between *'ilm* and *ma'rifa*, but both are to them, in any case, of a rational nature and are the same in value.²

Now we come to the place of al-Junayd in this controversy. Al-Junayd holds that the nature of knowledge of God is always essentially the same because the object is the same. But it has degrees, a different degree for the ordinary man and for the saint. A different degree for the beginner, for the advanced and for the one who reaches the highest stage. But none of them can attain to the complete knowledge of God on account of the limited nature of the human mind and the infinite nature of God.

Thus al-Junayd, like the theologians, and unlike most of the *ṣūfis*, uses the words *'ilm* and *ma'rifa* for knowledge of God equally. He does put great stress on it that the knowledge of God in every case is essentially the same and differs only in degrees. He explains this in a very clear and explicit statement, and this is what he says:

"I was asked about Knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*) and how to acquire it, and I answered that, since the object of this knowledge is one, knowledge of God, both by saints and by ordinary men, is of the same nature. However, it differs in degree. Clearly the saint has more profound knowledge, but complete knowledge is impossible, because of the infinite nature of God. Knowledge of God cannot be complete, since the instrument of knowledge is the intellect, and both mind and imagination are limited by their very nature.

"Those of His creatures who know most about Him

¹ Qushayrī, p. 142.

² See Tahanawī, *Kashshāf*, v. 2, p. 994.
Ibn Qayyim, *Madārīj*, v. 3, p. 215.

are the first to say that they are unable either fully to comprehend His greatness or to reveal His nature to their fellow human beings. They know that they are unable to comprehend Him, to whom nothing is like, because He is the everlasting and others are created, and He is the eternal and the others are appearances, and He is the Godhead and the others are subservient to Him, and He is Almighty, being Himself the source of His own strength, and every strong being is strong through His strength, and He knows all without being informed. He needs not to have recourse to others, and every being who has knowledge has his knowledge from God. Praise be to God—the First without beginning, the Everlasting without end. No one but He can be so described and to Him only is this description fitting.

“It follows, then, that His saints have a higher degree of knowledge of Him, even though this knowledge is imperfect, whereas the ordinary man, albeit he is devout, has a lesser degree of that knowledge. But, since this knowledge exists in varying degrees in both types of man, it is possible to investigate the nature of the phenomena of this knowledge as they occur in these men. In its first and simplest stages, knowledge of God expresses itself in the proclamation of His Unity, the affirmation of absolute monotheism, belief in His existence, acceptance of the Qu’rān and the ordinances contained therein. In its higher stages this knowledge is expressed in righteousness, the fear of God at all times, the recognition of God in all His creatures, the observance of a high moral standard and the avoidance of what is forbidden.

“Now, the higher degree of knowledge of God enjoyed by those who are privileged exceeds that of the ordinary man in intensity. This intensity depends on their perception of His Majesty, His Glory, His Omnipotence, His all-embracing Knowledge, His never-failing Generosity, His Nobility and His Superiority in all those attributes. In the measure of their perception they become aware of His Exaltedness, the elevation of His Majesty, the reverence due to Him, His Omnipotence, the efficacy and thoroughness of

His punishments, the richness of His rewards; His Generosity and unfailing Kindness in Paradise, His compassionate Nature, the multitude of His Gifts, His Graciousness, and His Good Actions, His Generosity and His Mercy. The more intense their perception of these qualities becomes, the more they extol Him, revere Him and love Him. They become humble before God, they fear Him and they hope in Him. They observe His ordinances and do not do that which is forbidden. They dedicate both mind and body entirely to God, and are impelled in this course by the intensity of their knowledge of God, their appreciation of His Exaltedness, the richness of His reward and the efficacy of His punishment. These are the privileged people and they are His saints.

“It is, therefore, that people say of someone: ‘‘Arif bi Allah’’ or ‘‘Alim bi Allah.’’ Among Moslems, when a man is seen to extol God, to revere Him, to fear Him, to hope in God, to seek Him, to yearn for Him, to practice righteousness and godly conduct, to weep and be grieved for his iniquities, to approach God with meekness and humility; this man is recognized as one whose knowledge of God is of a higher degree than that of an ordinary man.

“They are described in the Qur’ān in the following verse:

‘Of his worshippers God esteems
highest those that know Him.’”¹

We see clearly from al-Junayd’s words that the instrument for acquiring knowledge of God is the intellect (*‘aql*), but this rational approach will be in degrees. The knowledge of the ordinary man will be less than the knowledge of one whose intellect is clearer and who has reached a clearer and surer insight. But even the latter will not have the complete knowledge of God as the instrument is limited by its very nature, and God, by His very nature, is infinite. It is possible, according to al-Junayd, to inquire into the nature of the phenomena of this knowledge as it occurs in these different men.

Al-Junayd finds two types of knowledge of God which he calls the “first knowledge” and the “second knowledge.” The

¹ *Hilyat al Awliya*, v. 10, pp. 257-259.

one is discursive knowledge and the other intuitive knowledge. He says in one of his letters:

"A man who has acquired knowledge genuinely, who performs what this religious knowledge demands punctiliously, who is completely devoted to it, will find that the exigencies of that knowledge will not be one with his instinctive mental desires. He will then return to God, humble, modest, poor and with little, and ask Him to carry his burden of the knowledge of truth. At this stage he becomes able to carry out the exigencies of the second type of knowledge by the dominance of his intuitive spiritual desires over his actions, and is no longer positively aware of his knowledge of truth of the first type which bound him to the conditions laid down in its laws."¹

It seems that Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddima* (prologomena) shares this view of al-Junayd. He gives exactly the same theory in the same terms.²

The rational attitude in acquiring the knowledge of God, according to al-Junayd, will lead a part of the way, but not all the way, to the goal. The goal for al-Junayd is still the Unification with God, the *Tawḥīd* in which the worshipper has lost his individuality and his individual reason. He thus says further:

"At this stage he comes to the stage of the obliteration of his individual instinctive desire for pleasure and also to the disappearance of his critical distinction with regard to the purification of his instincts through the disappearance of his desire for pleasure. Then he is able fully to comprehend the true indications towards God from the nature of events, the changes in things, without need for any media of understanding, since now his faculty of distinction coincides with a purified intuition."³

So we see that human reason (*ʿaql*) and the work of the human intellect has its tasks and directs the seeker in the first stage of acquiring knowledge (*ʿilm*, *maʿrifa*). This knowledge will be either discursive or, on a higher level, intuitive. But after that, in the state of *Tawḥīd*, the muwahḥid is completely

¹ Risāla, No. 9.

² See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, v. 3, pp. 32, 33.

³ Risāla, No. 9.

possessed by God and has lost his individuality, and here the human intellect, which, according to al-Junayd, is the instrument of knowledge (*ʿilm* and *maʿrifa*), has no place. He says:

"When the worshipper has reached this stage he can no longer be described in rational terms. In fact, the promptings of his reason to the worshipper who has realized to the full the special *Tawḥīd* are now nothing but evil whispers which he has to overcome. It is reason which formerly directed the worshipper in his worship when he worshipped God as an individual, but when he is completely possessed by God, his individuality is suppressed. He is, as it were, transmuted. His external characteristics remain the same, but his individuality has vanished. Thus he is at once present and absent."¹

Al-Junayd experienced and witnesses that, when the seeker has reached that high stage of intense knowledge, he will quite naturally have left his individuality behind, and with it his human knowledge, and God's integral Knowledge will appear before him. Al-Junayd says in one of his letters:

"When the Knowledge of God has become intense and has raised you to a high degree, when your heart is full of this Knowledge, and you are pleased to serve Him and your mind becomes clear by mentioning His Name, and your understanding depends on Him, then your human existence is gone, your self-will have vanished, and your knowledge shall be enlightened because it comes from God, and God's Knowledge (*ʿilm al-Ḥaqq*) shall appear before you."²

This highest state of enlightenment is what al-Junayd calls, as we have seen, *Tawḥīd*—Unification; yet in this state a new kind of knowledge—*maʿrifa*—is revealed to him. This revealed knowledge is not additional knowledge about God, but a part of God's Knowledge which He gives to the muwahḥid.

Al-Junayd experiences that the knowledge of the Unity of God may be reached by the seeker and he still may not be in the state of Unification. If and when he reaches the state of Unifica-

¹ Risāla, No. 7.

² *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ*, v. 10, p. 281. *Lumāʾ*, p. 225.

tion, he will do so entirely without knowledge. Al-Junayd says further:

"The knowledge of Unity of God is different from the finding and feeling of Unification itself, and the finding and feeling of Unification is different from the knowledge of Unity."¹

Ibn Qayyim interprets this as follows:

"That means, one may, without any doubt comprehend the Unity of God and feel its intensity, but under circumstances which may be changed the worshipper may still be liable to be changed himself, because he is not yet in the state of Unification. This man is referred to as having the knowledge of the Unity of God, but still has not found Unification. Others feel Unification in their hearts and are *overwhelmed* in seeing the Unity of God, but what they find and feel is quite different from the knowledge of God; they are in a state of Unification."²

In al-Junayd's terminology—different from the terminology of some other *ṣūfīs* who take *ma'rifa* as the last goal—the last goal is quite clearly: *Tawḥīd*, Unification. Yet in Unification he himself has experienced a new thing, a vision and revelation from God for which he has no word: so that for lack of a term he calls it *ma'rifa*. Yet it has nothing to do with that knowledge, *ma'rifa*, of the striving seeker before that last stage which al-Junayd has described. It is essentially different, that is to say, it is not any more knowledge of God but a share in God's Knowledge.

What we have seen may explain to us why al-Junayd uses the term *ma'rifa* in two quite different senses, and why he sometimes uses the word *ʿārif* for the one who has reached the state of *Tawḥīd*. He says, for instance: "The *ʿārif* could not be an *ʿārif* until he is like earth upon which the pious and impious walk; and like the clouds that are spread over everything; and like the rains that descend upon all places quite without any likes and dislikes."³ Once, when he was asked about the *ʿārif*, he replied: "The colour of his vessel is the colour of water."⁴

¹ Qushayrī, p. 136.

² Madārīj as-Sālikīn, v. 3, p. 150.

³ Qushayrī 142, also 127.

⁴ Ibid.

Or: "The *ʿārif* is a son of the time being,"¹ meaning that he looks not to the past nor to the future. Al-Junayd, when asked about the saying of Dhu 'n-Nūn about the *ʿārif*: "He has been here and has gone away," gave the explanation: "The *ʿārif* does not restrict himself to any state which would prevent his entering another state, nor does he restrict himself to a station which would prevent his moving to another station. He behaves just like the people in whichever state they may be, whom he meets. He shares their feelings and speaks with people whatever their spiritual condition, so that they may understand and benefit from his words."²

By expression *ʿārif*, when applied in this way, al-Junayd, as we clearly see, does not mean the one who still seeks the knowledge of God—a seeking which, according to him, works by the means of the intellect—but he quite clearly means the *muwabbḥid* whom God inspired and to whom God in His grace has revealed Himself.

Now, after having reached this stage for which he left his individuality and all that goes with individuality, passions, will and reason behind, he will have to return to his normal state as an individual in which his reason and individuality and all that will be restored to him. Yet he will be a new individual with human qualities, carrying at the same time his experiences of God within him. Thus he will be at once present and absent, absent and present.

¹ Qushayrī, 143.

² Ibid.

CHAPTER XI

AL-JUNAYD AND PLOTINUS

The influence of Neo-platonic philosophy on the mystical teaching of Islām has been proved definitely for the later Islāmic period. It has been clearly traced in Ibn 'Arabī, Sahra-wardi, and others. But for the earlier period, from lack of material, this question has remained in doubt.

The letters of al-Junayd, which we have endeavoured to interpret in this study, have shed a new light on this problem and give a firm basis for considering it.

In al-Junayd's letters we meet, as we have indicated above,¹ numerous traces of Neo-platonic philosophy which cannot be put down to the chance of similar thinking and parallel experience only, but which must be based on some positive contact. Moreover, we find that these Neo-platonic elements in al-Junayd are in no way tinted by the Christian mystical thought, itself largely of Neo-platonic inspiration, which flourished before and at that time in the Near East. What we find appears to be a sum of pure and classical Neo-platonic ideas, not blended with any other elements so characteristic for the later evolution of Neo-platonism in Eastern Christian thought.

As the Neo-platonic literary tradition is very complex and scattered, we think it the best way to go back to the originator of this whole vast and profoundly influential school, to Plotinus himself (A.C. 205-270). The philosophy of Plotinus of Alexandria, which bases itself on the system of Plato and integrates much of the Aristotelic and Stoic thoughts, is preserved to us in full in the six books of the *Enneads* which contain the teachings of the great thinkers, in his inimitable personal style, written down by the hand of his nearest disciple, Porphyry. We thus propose to give a brief survey of Plotinus' general philosophy and of his mystical approach. This will convey to

us a wide view of the problem and will allow us to make a comparison.

Al-Junayd's writings seem to indicate that he has not had in his hand any Neo-platonic systematic work. We find no signs that he made a study of the whole general system of the Neo-platonics with its characteristic cosmology, astronomical theory, physics and aesthetics. The influence is only in the range of mysticism which is al-Junayd's personal concern. We thus assume that this current of ideas must have reached him through his teachers or other contemporaries unknown to us, by word of mouth. He seems not to have been conscious of "philosophising," but to have absorbed and integrated these thoughts, as they reached him, into his own seeking and thinking.

SUMMARY OF PLOTINUS' GENERAL PHILOSOPHY

We try to give a brief, sketchy survey of Plotinus' system and of his mystical thought.¹

Plotinus starts from two facts, which he takes as accepted by those who are his students: the higher Reality or intelligible World other than the ordinary world around us, and the soul sharing in this higher world.²

In the centre of his system stands what we may call the Plotinian trinity.

(a) The primary for him is the One which he traces in his deductions as *the Origin, the First, the Good*. He is shy to give It or Him any name, and stresses that each of these terms is insufficient. One ought to call it neither that nor this. He states that the One is even beyond being. He is but one, not composite, quite Himself, supermundane; neither is He thought, nor thinkable, non-active, nor Himself thinking. "He needs nothing," being utterly self-sufficient. Thus he cannot, according to Plotinus, be imagined as the creator of the existing all which still originates from Him. Plotinus uses the comparison with the Light itself which is eternally, and with diffused light

¹ We base our survey particularly on the 9th Book of the VIth *Ennead*, *On the Good and the One*, which concludes the whole work. Our translations are from the original Greek. Plotinus *Enneades*, ed. Fr. Dübner, Didot, Paris 1896.—The author is grateful for Greek scholarship and translations to Ruth Gaevernitz, Ph.D.

² VIth *Ennead*, 9, 5, pg. 532, 533, Didot.

which derives from it "without any streaming out and thus without making the source, the Light, any less."¹

(b) Thus Plotinus comes to the second principle of his trinity: the *Nous*, *Mind*, which, according to him, is the primary being. The *Nous* is all-knowing, perpetually thinking, seeing. His is wisdom (*sophia*) and power (*dynamis*). He is creating and upholding all that there is. He comprises—creating and thinking in the same process—all existence, the whole intelligible world and visible universe, the ideas or original forms, the divine beings whether invisible or those visible ones, the stars and planets and the earth, the human beings endowed with thinking souls, and the other creatures of nature. "The *Nous* sees as well the First, the One, as also the World. He is similar to the One, yet not the One, still composite, at the same time many-and-one, all-embracing, swinging eternally in himself in a tranquil spherical movement."²

(c) The third principle of Plotinus' trinity is *Soul*, *Psyche*. Soul is the creation of *Nous*, "the daughter of *Nous*." She is with and near to him. Yet she longs! She is bold enough to "separate" from *Nous*, craving for what is not *Nous*—not spiritual—the dark, low and heavy; that which is dangerously luring her away—*matter*. Thus, "running away like a naughty child, she descends to the material world" and "embraces matter."³ She branches off into individual souls which will combine with matter, by this act imprinting the spiritual, the formative ideas on the material, thus bringing forth individual intermediate beings that possess soul in all ranges of creation, and particularly that double-natured being, *man*.

Her separation from her origin is a self-willed act which Plotinus feels to be a kind of going astray. She now feels unhappy, homesick, longing to go back to her origin, her abode

¹ VI 9, 2, p. 530. "Generally speaking, the One is first, while the Mind and the ideas and the being are not first."

VI 9, 3, p. 531. "*It* has not even an intelligible form. The nature of the One is the originating source of all things that are, yet is nothing of them all. One ought to call it neither that nor this, but we, like soaring around *It*, long to express what we suffer, now getting near, now falling off . . ."

VI 9, 9, p. 537. "... just as when the Sun remains, the light remains."

² VI 9, 3, p. 531; 9, 5, p. 533.

³ VI 9, 8, 5. "Soul is from mind and shares in reason with him and thus has virtue."

in the eternal. She is ever longing to return to her father.¹ In most men, the soul is, as it were, submerged in the material existence, but in the best men—the pious, the philosophers, the soul rises above the material. Such a man is not like ordinary creatures, men as well as animals, "submerged under the surface of the water," but he may be likened to someone "who has his feet in the water while his figure stands erect in the bright daylight."²

The soul longing to go back to her origin, may break her fetters. She feels she has suffered violence by the body and "like an unhappy bride she flees from her mate and runs away to her Father's house and finds comfort in the arms of her Father."³

The soul, according to Plotinus, may even be able to soar beyond *Nous* and reach the First, the One.

In Plotinus' system Soul, as we have seen, is primarily Universal Soul—individual souls are thus to say loans from this All-Soul. When Eustochius, his disciple and physician, came into the room when Plotinus was on his deathbed, Plotinus said: "For you I wait. I am just trying to give back what is spirit in me to the World Spirit."⁴

Far from these three principles, the One, the Mind, and Soul, there is for Plotinus the utterly formless and soul-less, the *not-being*: matter. Thus creation is thought of in three stages, starting from the highest, lower and lower, sharing less and less in the spiritual, "a descending scale of perfection, the diminution continuing until it fades into not-being, like light into the darkness."⁵

PLOTINUS' MYSTICAL APPROACH

The soul, according to Plotinus, cannot return to her origin without becoming light and no more heavy. The seeker has to put behind himself the cravings of the senses, the moods of feeling, the promptings of the will and even the activity of reason. He has to leave behind even the ideas, making *It*, *God*,

¹ VI 9, 8.

² VI 9, 8.

³ VI 9, 8.

⁴ Porphyry. *Life of Plotinus*, Ch. 2., Brehier, Plotin, Paris 1924.

⁵ Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, reprinted 1948, p. 294.

the sole object of his search. (He will perceive the ideas again later after his return "from the secret innermost chamber of the temple.") The seeker will finally lose even his self-consciousness. "He should get empty of feelings—and even of ideas—he shall even *ignore himself* as being now inside of It and living together with It and having communication with It." (VI 9. 7.)

Plotinus warns the mystic not to give access to any optical "visions." "The soul must be without any images, and there should remain in her nothing hindering from getting filled up and lit up with the First Nature." (VI 9. 7.)

The soul thus will become, as Plotinus teaches, quite herself: not any more composed or combined with anything alien, but quite *one*. (VI 9. 3; 4, pp. 531, 532.)

Concentrated on her goal, the soul will not any more move astray, but like in a circle she will be moving around *Him*, as a member of sacred choir moves around the leader of the choir and looks at him only, thus dancing right and singing in tune. Finally, the soul, from being a swinging point of the periphery of the circle, will fall back into the centre of the circle, "like an image stepping back into its original." (VI 9. 11, pp. 539, 540.)

The philosopher warns his disciples not to be misled by such comparisons. "These circles and this centre are *not* in space like the circles of the mathematicians."

Plotinus makes it quite clear that God and the soul are not in space; we must not think in terms of space. *The contact with Him is not in any other way but through similarity, through being of the same kind—kindred to Him. Separation is through difference, through being different.* (VI 9. 4.)

Plotinus accepts, as we have seen above, an original state of the soul with God, before she became united to the body by birth. "This is," according to Plotinus, "her origin as well as her goal; her origin because she comes from there, her goal because the good is there. Living here, amongst these things in this world, means a falling-out and a flight and a loosing of her wings. *Being there, she becomes what she was.*" (VI 9. 9.) Or, in another word of Plotinus: "When he is as he was when he came from Him, then he will be able to see Him, because He by nature can be seen." (VI 9. 4.)

As we see, Plotinus trusts and witnesses that the soul of a human being living as yet in this world, may be graced to return to the state "in which she was One, before she came into this world," thus to say anticipating, as far as humanly possible now, her final return.

God is called by Plotinus—in the language going back to Plato—the *True Light*, and the blessed man is the one who is able to "receive the *True Light*, and to let his soul be lit up entirely in having drawn near." (VI 9. 4.) He also compares God with the ever-vivifying air (in the original sense of the word *pneuma*, spirit = breath). "*We breath Him—and safe.*" (VI 9. 9.)

The Union is, according to Plotinus, experienced through an utter sensitiveness by virtue of similarity. "He is like all-feeling, touching It, as it were, with subtle fingertips throughout, fitting in and harmonized throughout, and thus to say all-embraced." (VI 9. 9, p. 532; cf. VI 9. 4.)

The experience of that splendour of light there, blissful as it is, means at the same time a suffering, an undergoing, like a lover's. "If he suffers nothing, and has not in himself like a suffering of love through that seeing, like a lover who found rest in the beloved . . . he will not yet have been carried to the One." (VI 9. 4.) The soul in this world may, Plotinus says, smile like a courtesan at ever so many of its passing features. Yet she loves God with her only true love. (VI 9. 9, p. 537.)

Plotinus ascribes a relative value to the longing for the beautiful in this world—to love and friendship between two mortals—"love of images" he calls it—as transient reflections of the Love of the One.¹

Plotinus impresses upon his disciples the difficulties of the progress "from knowledges, through knowledge, to view . . ." and he equally witnesses the difficulty, yea impossibility, for the soul to remain in the state of Union. She is liable of getting tired. She will get heavy again and sink and be separated—like birds, he says, who, flying over the shining surface of the sea, will feel tired out and will come down on firm ground for a rest. (VI 9. 3, p. 530.)

¹ Cf. Ennead I, Book VI, On the Beautiful.

Again and again Plotinus stresses the difficulty of telling. The mystic is at a loss how to render account of his experience "because there was neither a seeing nor a seen—but One." Neither subject nor object remained. He quotes Plato's word: "One can neither say nor write it. And yet—we will ever try to do so."

Plotinus has the attitude of a teacher. It is possible, he says, to guide your disciple on the path of discipline and to induce him, through higher and higher argument of reason, to faith: "Part of the way the teacher may guide you. But *then* you will be quite left to yourself, quite alone, depending on your own firm will and innermost power . . ." (VI 9. 4.) "Take those notions, though inadequate: the First—the Origin—the Good—the One, and starting from thence—*see . . .*" (VI 9. 7.)

He urges that it is neither right nor pious to impart this knowledge to anyone who has nothing of this experience and longing in himself. He mentions the decree of contemporary mystery cults: "Don't Divulge Anything to the Uninitiated." Doing so might, according to Plotinus, cause grievous misunderstanding and misuse. This was already the attitude of Plato, who urged the recipient of his second Letter with its theological passages to burn the Letter after carefully reading it, so that it might not fall into wrong hands, and who, in his seventh Letter, says: "I have never written these things, nor will I." Young King Alexander reprimanded his teacher Aristotle, in a letter, for publishing his *Metaphysics*: "In what will we still differ from the crowds?" he wrote. Aristotle wrote him, not to worry: "Those who read it, will read it and not understand it, if they are not of those who possess the knowledge."¹

We may follow Plotinus further and hear what he gives as his experience as to the state after the mystical Union. It is a positive, not a merely negative state. In this enlightened state after the Union, when the soul finds herself ordered and lit throughout, the mystic, led by the *memory* of his experience, may be able to do good deeds for others in the earthly society of men. "This," Plotinus says, "is probably what the ancient Greek poets meant when they called King Minos of Crete a

¹ Platon. 2nd Letter, 114 b.c. and 7th Letter, 341 c., 342 a. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 7.

'companion of God.' He may have put down his celebrated laws for his people like shadows and memories from his experience." (VI 9. 7.)

On the other hand, Plotinus witnesses that the soul, when she has fallen out of the Union and finds herself remote and isolated, will be filled with deep longing and sorrow. But, he says, she may yet repeat her experience, "she may become light again, and ascend again . . ."

We can do no better than to give Plotinus' own words, the last sentences of the *Enneads*, which conclude the whole work. (VI 9. 11.)

"But soaring upwards, the soul will come into nothing other than into herself . . . to be in herself alone, and not in anything that is, means to be in Him: For He Himself is not being, but beyond being, there where she communicates.

"Could someone see himself become such, he would have himself as a likeness of Him. And if he now would step beyond himself like an image into the original, then he would have reached the end of his journey.

"Yet should he fall out of the vision, he will again awaken the virtue which is in him and will find himself well ordered throughout—and he will again, through virtue, become light and rise to the Mind (*Nous*), and further, through wisdom, to *It*. And such is the life of gods and of godly and blessed men: a life turning away from all other things here and not enjoying things here, a flight of the only to the Only."

COMPARISON BETWEEN PLOTINUS' AND AL-JUNAYD'S MYSTICAL TEACHINGS

This brief sketch of the doctrine of Plotinus, which does not claim to be detailed or complete, yet allows us to compare the mystical teachings of Plotinus with those of al-Junayd.

Both Plotinus and al-Junayd hold that there is a highest Reality, and for both there is a gap between this Reality and the world of phenomena we live in.

According to both, the soul derives from that yonder. She has descended and finds herself in this lower world into which

she came by birth. She is now a compound, complex creature, soul, reason, will, senses, held by the physical body. She *longs* to return to her origin and, through continuous striving and labour, she may be able to become quite herself—quite one again, and thus ascend towards her original state.

Yet here we find a significant difference. According to Plotinus, the soul has separated from her Origin, having been drawn, through a kind of curiosity, down to the lower world into the embrace of the body. She makes a straying step, which leads to separation. For Junayd, while he also uses the term of separation, the descent of the soul into this lower world, and her being linked with the body by birth, is by no means caused by a volition of the soul, but simply by an act of God.

There is a very strong similarity between Plotinus and al-Junayd in this doctrine of the pre-existence and post-existence of the soul in the Divine Origin before and after this life. Al-Junayd interprets the verses of the Qu'rān, VII, 166 and 167, in this sense, as we have shown above in our chapter on the Covenant, "Mithāq."¹

Both Plotinus and al-Junayd hold that by her nature the soul may ascend to her Origin, as God, by His nature, can be *seen* "through force of inner vision" (mushāhada).

The stages of this mystical path are indicated to their disciples in a very similar way by Plotinus and al-Junayd. The soul can only return to her goal through the hard method of discipline; by "becoming light and no more heavy," not any more composed, quite simple and *one* again in an unwavering quest for the One. She has to leave behind the craving of the senses, the promptings of the will, even reason and all those thoughts with which her reason provides her continuously, and even the ideas. Finally, she will leave behind even her consciousness of self in order to sink and lose herself in the One.

Plotinus, as well as al-Junayd, calls this final mystical stage "*oblivion*" (*lētē, fanā*). Both Plotinus and al-Junayd describe the struggle of the soul to abide in this union with her interfering weakness, which makes her apt to be separated again, as a painful *trial* (*agōn, balā*).

¹ P. 76, 77.

The contact and Union, according to both Plotinus and al-Junayd, is not through approach in space, but through similarity; separation is through difference. The soul, according to both, is liable to get tired, and she will find herself separated again. Both thinkers stress the utter difficulty to give an account of the experience, because subject and object were no more while there was One.

The mystic thus will speak in comparisons. Both Plotinus and al-Junayd use the metaphor of Light. Plotinus also has similes for mathematics: "it is like a point in the periphery of a circle falling back into its centre," while such mathematical comparisons are not in al-Junayd—though they may be found in later Muslim thinkers. Plotinus' metaphor of the lover and the beloved is known to al-Junayd, and it plays an even more essential part in later Šūfīsm.—Both thinkers value the state after the Union positively, not merely negatively. In this state, according to both, the soul will find herself "well ordered and lit up throughout." The soul may well hold memories of her unique experience, *principia* which will allow the mystic in this state to be active for the best of his fellow men. Al-Junayd calls this state the State of Sobriety. This expression does not occur in Plotinus, and seems original to al-Junayd.

Both Plotinus and al-Junayd witness that in this state after the mystical Union the soul often will be homesick and in pain, and will long for what she lost. Al-Junayd and Plotinus feel that, when the mystic sees something beautiful in this world, his longing will be awakened and he will feel both joy and sadness. It may happen, for instance, says al-Junayd, when he looks at a beautiful landscape. The soul, according to both, may be able to rise again and reach the state of Union once more.

Both Plotinus and al-Junayd consider the mystical gift to be a special grace granted to only a few elect ones. Such men can be led, according to both, by a good teacher and guide on the path. Yet the teacher can lead the disciple only a certain length of the way. Then the disciple will be left to himself and will have to reach his goal alone.

What in fact makes the mystic try to tell of an experience beyond words is his deep concern for his close friends and fellow seekers. The relation between teacher and disciple,

Shaykh and murid, becomes of high importance, just as for Plato and Plotinus, so also to the Moslem *ṣūfīs*. To this relation between teacher and disciple we owe the whole mystical esoteric teaching and discipline among the Greeks and in Islām.

After having surveyed the numerous common elements and related notions in Plotinus and al-Junayd regarding the mystical path of the soul, we raise our minds to what is bound to be the first and last for the thinker and for the mystic, the idea of God. In al-Junayd's religious experience, as we have seen throughout his letters, God is all-present, all-seeing, all-active, all-creating. He is victorious, overwhelming. He is close by. He draws his worshipper near and engulfs him in His Presence. He personally elects His worshipper and endows him with super-human force to reach Him. He Himself acts in him to bring difference to nought and to bridge the gap.

For Plotinus, on the other hand, God was utterly remote, *beyond being*, beyond thinking, beyond acting, beyond creating—a conception of utter Oneness which caused Plotinus to accept the idea of a mediator, a creator who, thinking and active, "comprises the Universe in his creative thought," the Mind or Nous. Here the difference is fundamental indeed.

This is what we find: Al-Junayd's idea of God shows no influence whatever of the Greek philosophy. His faith in God is purely Islāmic: God all-present, creating, preserving, active, victorious, ever near to man, is the idea of God of the Qur'ān. God, electing his worshipper, drawing him nigh on the path of the seeker, finally engulfing and overwhelming him and merging him into His Presence—this shows the development of Islāmic religious experience from the Qur'ān to the early *ṣūfī* mystics. No external philosophical influence can be assumed as an explanation for this development.

We may well feel that no sublimated gnostic theology, no remote Deity such as Plotinus had taught, could influence the strong Muslim conviction alive in al-Junayd.

In realizing this fundamental difference, it becomes more evident that in the doctrine of the Soul and the mystical path the Plotinian influence on al-Junayd seems indeed deep and significant.

We may pause for a moment to consider the question: What

attracted the early Muslim mystics to this Neo-platonic philosophy so that they opened their minds to it and became widely and deeply interested? It may have been, as we feel, this: That there came within their reach a comprehensive and enlightened system of thought, which based itself on the Oneness of God, and which, from this central point, comprised and deduced all spheres of knowledge about the Deity, the Universe and Man. The mystic in primitive Islām had been at first an isolated, groping individual. Then there may have been groups. Some among these early Muslim mystics will have been attracted particularly by the fact that in this sum of Greek knowledge they found a theory of the nature and potentialities of the soul and of the conditions and stages of the mystical path—in one word: A mystical system. Acquaintance with this was like a confirmation of their own quest at a time when they were often misunderstood by their contemporaries. It encouraged them to make conscious to themselves their own mystical experiences, to "speak and write about it," and prudently to teach it to their nearest friends. They would penetrate deeply into those thoughts, pondering, selecting, and together discussing them. The contact of the early muslim mystics with Neo-platonic philosophy made possible the development of a mystical system in Islām, with its discipline and its terminology, thus giving the opportunity for the emergence of mystical schools around the personalities of the early and later *ṣūfī* thinkers.

It is known that Greek philosophy, through translations into Arabic, and it may be also through personal contacts, reached Baghdād under the auspices of Khālifs al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'tazim. With regard to Neo-platonism, its influence on later Muslim thinkers and mystics has been established already.¹ The new fact which emerges from our study is that it influenced muslim mystics so essentially at such an early date as we have traced in the thought of al-Junayd.

This brings us back to our comparison between Plotinus and al-Junayd, both of whom were born teachers of men. Plotinus is, first of all, the philosopher who left a comprehensive system of thought on the Universe and man to posterity. He

¹ See p. 13, 14, 15.

was himself a mystic, and this enabled him to make the mystical experience the crowning feature of his general philosophy.

Al-Junayd, on the other hand, was first of all a mystic who, with his mature experience, became a guide to his close circle of friends—seekers like himself. His teaching is thus always aphoristic, not systematic. His contact with philosophy may have helped him to develop that deep and subtle knowledge of himself and his fellow men which is characteristic of him, as it is of Socrates. It may have enabled him to communicate in lucid words his own spiritual life to those who trusted him as a guide and friend. Plotinus' philosophy may have helped him in his endeavours to speak of the mystical experience in its essence and in its stages as clearly as is humanly possible. The clarity of the thinker and teacher, and the sublime, intimate experience of the ṣūfī, are happily integrated in al-Junayd's personality.

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TRANSLATION

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PART III

THE RASA'IL OF AL-JUNAYD